Seminar on Kant: Session I
April 4, 1967

(Discussion of paper topics)

The Critique of Pure Reason will be discussed in the first three meetings. The Metaphysical Foundation of Morals will be discussed in the second three meetings. In the eighth meeting we will read What is Enlightenment? and the Idea for a Universal History. In the ninth meeting we will read A Critical Review of J. G. Herder's Ideas for a Philosophy of History. In the tenth meeting the Conjectural Beginning of Human History. In the eleventh meeting we will read Theory and Practice of which only one part has been translated in the Modern Library edition. There are three parts, but as far as I know there is no English translation of the whole which is regretable. In the twelfth meeting The End of All Things. The thirteenth meeting - Perpetual Peace. The text itself. And in the fourteenth meeting the Appendix to Perpetual Peace which is almost as long as the work itself. In the fifteenth meeting we will read An Old Question Raised Again. Now I will leave it at that because I suppose that we will have to insert another discussion meeting along the way and, therefore, we won't need a special paper for the sixteenth meeting.

Let us begin at the beginning from things which are obvious to every one of you. When people speak today of political issues they come to speak sooner or later of two fundamentally different appraoches to political things. The approaches are called Liberalism and Conservatism. Liberalism is understood here and now in contradistinction to conservatism. This distinction is sufficient for most practical purposes. But to admit this is tantamount to saying that the distinction is not free from theoretical difficulties. These theoretical difficulties are not barrent of practical consequences.

One difficulty can be disposed of very easily. Most people are liberal in some respects and conservative in others. A very moderate liberal may not be distinguishable from a very moderate conservative. But this very assertion presupposes the existence at least of the ideal type of the Liberal and the ideal type of the Conservative. Now ideal type - in case you have not read Max Weber - means a construct for the purpose of analysis to which nothing need correspond in reality. It stems fundamentally from physics, but has been carried over to the social sciences. Yet the ideal types are quite real in this particular case. Proof: no one would hesitate to call Barry Goldwater a Conservative and Wayne Morse a Liberal.

A Liberal can be said, as of now, to be a man who is for the war against poverty and against the war in Vietnam while the Conservative is a man who is in favor of the war in Vietnam and against the war against poverty. This I believe will be universall acceptable.

Now a somewhat deeper difficulty comes to sight once we consider the fact that Liberalism and Conservatism have a common basis. Both are based on liberal democracy and, therefore, both are opposed to Communism. Hence, their opposition does not seem to be

fundamental. Yet they differ profoundly in this very opposition. One can say that Liberalism agrees with Communism in a general way as regards the ultimate goal, although it radically disagrees with Communism as regards the ways and means toward that goal. The goal is the universal and classless society or to accept a formulation proposed by Khruschev, the universal and homogeneous state. Every adult human being is to be a full member of that state regardless of sex, race, ethnic origin or any other consideration. The necessary and full title to citizenship in that state is supplied by one's being an adult, non-moronic human being for all such time that one is not in an insane asylum or a penitentiary.

Now the ways and means according to Liberalism as distinguished from Communism are these: The universal and homogeneous state is to be achieved preferably by democratic, peaceful means. At any rate, without war although not necessarily without revolution, revolutions backed by the sympathy and support of the majority of the peoples concerned.

There is also some difference regarding the goal itself because a Liberal would insist that in this state the right to criticize measures and men of the government must be preserved. Even the man at the top of the hierarchy - whatever his name may be - must be subject to criticism by the public. And this right of public criticism must be granted to everyone, however humble and inarticulate he may be.

Some might say that most Liberals are much too pragmatic to aim consciously at the universal state. After all, that is not a practical proposal in our time and age. They would be perfectly satisfied with a federation of the now existing or soon emerging states provided that these states submit to control by a truly universal and greatly strenghthened United Nations. Still, this would mean that they are concerned with the greatest possible approximation to the universal and homogeneous state, or that they are guided by the ideal of the universal and homogeneous state, an ideal which will never, perhaps, be fully actualized. Some Liberals might object to the term "ideal" on the grounds that the universal and homogeneous state or the greatest possible approximation to it is a requirement of hard-headed politics and not to be mistaken for an ideal. The universal and homogeneous state is rendered possible or necessary by economic and technological progress including the actual necessity of making thermonuclear war impossible for all future times. And it is rendered necessary and possible by the ever-increasing wealth of the advanced countries which are compelled by sheer self-interest to develop the underdeveloped countries.

As for the still existing tension between the liberal democracies and the communist countries that tension will be disposed of by the ever-increasing welfarism in the liberal democracies and the ever-increasing liberalism due to the demand for consumer goods of all kinds in the communist states. I believe that I have not said anything which you do not know by heart, but I have to remind you of that.

Conservatism does not necessarily deny the necessity or the desireability of larger political units than what one may call the typical nation state of the 19th century. For good or ill, the

Conservatives can no longer be imperialists. But there is no reason why Conservatives should be opposed, for instance, to a united Europe or perhaps even to NATO. Yet they are likely to understand such units differently from the Liberals. An outstanding European Conservative has spoken of _____, of the Europe of the fatherlands. In other words, there should be a larger unit, but the original units should, nevertheless, be preserved in decisive respects. Conservatism has a more favorable inclination towards the particularistic and the heterogeneous than the Liberals, a greater willingness to accept natural or historical diversity. In this country, for example, the Conservatives are more in favor of states' rights than the Liberals.

To the extent to which universalism in politics is based on the universalism essential to reason, Conservatism is characterized by a distrust of reason, particularly of what is called abstract reason. But here we must raise this question: What precisely is the virtue of diversity as such? After all, at first glance the thing which would seem to be important would be human excellence, and a human excellence as a universal goal for all mankind. Why should there be a virtue in diversity as such? Diversity is, as it were, taken care of by the mere fact that men are by nature so greatly different. So the excellence of A will not be identical with the excellence of B. But why this concern of the Conservatives with diversity? Perhaps the respect for diversity is rooted in the respect for individuality. This is, at least, frequently said. I do not think that we will succeed in drawing a clear line between Conservatism and Liberalism on that ground. We remain somewhat closer to what is noncontroversial by saying that the Conservatives' greater and deeper regard for the natural, historical diversity is rooted in their distrust of change. What is called, by the Liberals, the stand backism of the Conservatives, i.e. their sticking to the status quo.

The Liberals, in contrast, have less misgivings regarding change. Liberals are more inclined than Conservatives to be sanguine regarding change. Liberals are inclined to believe that, on the whole, change is change for the better, i.e. progress. As a matter of fact - and here I mention something which must come as a novelty to you - Liberals frequently are called Progressives. Progressivism is, indeed, a better term for the opposite to Conservativism than is Liberalism for Conservativism is the desire to preserve because of the distrust of change. Therefore the opposite of Conservativism should be defined as the opposite posture towards change, towards the future. One is thus tempted to say that Conservativism and Progressivism are opposed to each other by their posture towards change rather than by their substantive goals.

But this is not precise enough. Both Conservativism and Progressivism agree that the change goes in the direction of the universal or homogeneous state and it is for this reason that the Progressivists applaud the change and the Conservatives fear it. This, incidentally, would explain why Conservativism is on the whole weaker than Progressivism or Liberalism. In other words, the greater, stronger trend is in favor of this movement.

The difficulty of defining clearly the opposition between Conservativism and Liberalism is particularly great in this country because this country came into being by virtue of a revolution which means

of a violent change, a violent break with the past. And it is quite interesting that one of the most conservative groups in this country calls itself the Daughters of the American Revolution.

The opposition between Conservativism and Liberalism was much clearer in the first half of the 19th century on the continent of Europe. It is on the continent of Europe at this time that these two parties opposed each other for the first time under these names. On the one side there was throne and order-Conservativism. On the other popular sovereignty and religion as a private affair. That was the clear-cut, substantive difference.

In England, which is in between the European continent and this country and not only geographically, the struggle between the two opposing forces had already been decided against throne and order in the 17th century - 1688. The Whigs versus the Tories. And the Whigs -one can say with a slight exaggeration - were allied with the Bank of England and the Tories with the throne and order.

Now, to reach full clarity about the issue which is conceived in the contemporary conflict between Conservativism and Liberalism, one would have to go back to 16th century England where this issue started. This means in the first place, to the new political philosophy or political science of Thomas Hobbes. This is here only a bald assertion, but at the beginning of a course one must make some assumptions and perhaps we have time to explain it later. Yet one cannot stop at Hobbes. The analysis of Hobbes political philosophy brings to light the fact that the primary premise of the radical change which was effected by Hobbes, was stated or established by Machiavelli. Here I refer again to the fifteenth chapter of Machiavelli's Prince which is only one or two pages. Those who have not read it are requested to do so. What Machiavelli proposes there is roughly this. Political philosophy hitherto was guided by how men ought to live. This led to the consequence that traditional political philosophy culminated in the description of or demand for imaginary principalities or imaginary kingdoms or republics. This means regimes which are not necessarily actual. That it is a good analysis of traditional political philosophy can easily be proven by the study of Plato and Aristotle. The good society is the society directed toward virtue, toward human excellence, and this good society - if taken strictly - is not necessarily actual, and the chances are that it will not be actual because virtue is not such a powerful incentive most of the time.

Against this Machiavelli demands that we should take our bearings by how men do live, not by how they ought to live. In other words, Machiavelli says that if you want to have some reasonable order of human things you should not aim as high as, say, Aristotle did and as the churchmen did. You must lower your standards. A simple example: the most famous version of the traditional doctrine in Hobbes' time was the natural law doctrine especially as developed by Thomas Aquinas. According to that teaching there are three kinds of natural inclinations: self-preservation, sociality, and knowledge of God or knowledge in general. What Hobbes did was to forget about the two higher things and understand civil society as perfectly intelligible on the basis of the lowest, i.e. self-preservation in the belief that the lowest was the most

effective. That is that most people most of the time don't wish to be killed and they have a very strong aversion to being killed. Whereas their altruistic desire is not so powerful most of the time. Hobbes tried to build political science on a low, but solid ground and this is a thought which had tremendous effects.

One can also say in describing Hobbes' view that he was the first political thinker who was a political hedonist identifying the good with the pleasant. But he was political, whereas classical hedonists were not political thinkers.

Here at this moment I will mention Kant for the first time, although he has been on my mind all the time. What Kant did was to restore the high moral level and tone of classical political philosophy, perhaps even surpassing the classics in this respect. Thus we can say that Kant, more than anyone else - became the founder of a moral - severely moral - liberalism in contradistinction to the hedonistic or utilitarian liberalism founded by Hobbes. This needs an obvious qualification which I will mention immediately. It goes without saying that the tradition founded by Socrates, Plato and Aristotle did not die out by virtue of the act of Machiavelli or even of Hobbes. In the first place, the Catholic tradition preserved the older view. But even in the Protestant cultures it proved to be necessary very soon to restore the older tradition to the extent that it was compatible with Protestantism. One great example is Richard Hooker who rewrote with very minor changes as far as political philosophy proper is concerned, the teaching. This was, of course, also true in Germany and here the greatest name which one would have to mention is that Christian , a name which we will find when reading Kant. Of course, there are other men, for example, Shaftsberry who tried to preserve or restore the tradition against Hobbes, Locke and so on.

Hitherto I have spoken of how a simple reflection on our political situation leads us to Kant. Let me now say a few words of how a simple reflection on political science - which is not the same as the political situation - leads to Kant. Political science, as you all know, is a part of the social sciences and, therefore, according to its claim, value-free. It is based on the distinction between fact and value. Factual judgements are the legitimate sphere of social science, but value judgements transcend that sphere. The distinction between facts and values is a modification of the older distinction between is and ought. The distinction between is and ought was classically stated by Kant, but according to Kant there is rational knowledge - knowledge of the ought. This is denied by the social scientists. According to the social scientists there cannot be knowledge of the true values. They don't exist. In other words, according to social science, all values are equal before the tribunal of reason and, hence, of the social sciences. The scientific understanding of political things or social things is preceded by the pre-scientific understanding of them, the common sense understanding of them, or the citizen's understanding of them. This common sense understanding is not simply superceded by the scientific understanding or transformed into scientific understanding. In the decisive respect the pre-scientific understanding survives intact as a basis of scientific understanding. In other words, our ordinary citizen's understanding of political things is not something like a hat which we

leave with the girl before we enter a restaurant, in this case the social science building, but it is with us all the time. There is a very simple proof of that which I have used n times and I ask the older students among you to forgive me for repeating it. When you set out - not in this department - but, say, in social science, to make some field studies and to find answers to questions, no one will tell you that you should ask only human beings and not dogs, cats, trees and so on. It goes without saying. And, still more strange, no one tells you how to distinguish a human being from a dog, a cat, or a tree. That is simply presupposed. You can say that it belongs to those things which are a matter of course, but these are exactly the problematic things which are taken for granted without any consideration. Now this common sense understanding on which all scientific understanding is based is unaware of the fact/value distinction. As you can easily see the statements: This man is a crook or this is a corrupt machine. These are as much factual statements for the citizens as the statement that there are so and so many millions of people in the city of Chicago. It would seem then, that a return to the common sense understanding would free us from the absurdities which follow from the assumptions that all values are equal.

Here we are confronted with a great difficulty. Namely, that the common sense understanding is variable. The present-day common sense is not the common sense of the age of Queen Victoria, and still less the common sense of the Middle Ages and so on and so on. In a word, the common sense is radically historical. If this is so, there cannot be the value system, the true concept of the good society. Therefore, political philosophy in any serious sense of the word is impossible. We must face this difficulty. We must try to reach clarity about this question: Is philosophy and, in particular political philosophy, essentially historical or not? Therefore, in order to understand this question we must have the greatest possible clarity about these two alternatives - the fundamentally historical political philosophy and the fundamentally non-historical political philosophy. This requires in the first place an understanding of Plato and Aristotle whose political philosophy cannot said to be historical in any serious sense.

Kant is of particular importance as regards this question. According to Kant, there is the true moral and political doctrine valid for man as man, just as earlier thinkers all had thought. Yet there is a difference. Let us read the heading of the last section of the Critique of Pure Reason: The History of Pure Reason. Is it imaginable that Aristotle or Plato would have spoken of a history of pure reason? Would you read that please?

Student: "This title stands here only in order to indicate one remaining division of the system which future workers must complete. I content myself with casting a cursory glance from a purely transcendental point of view. Namely, that of the nature of pure reason in the works of those who have labored in this field, a glance which reveals many stately structures, but in ruins only. It is a very notable fact, although it could not have been otherwise, that in the infancy of philosophy men began where we should incline to end, namely with the knowledge of God, occupying them with the hope or rather with the specific nature of another world. However gross the religious concepts generated by the ancient

practices . . . And here I find that there are three issues in regard to which the most noteworthy changes have taken place in the course of the resulting controversy."

Strauss: Let us stop here. Kant speaks of the fundamental alternatives regarding metaphysics, and he treats them as essentially coeval, not as historical in other words. Let us read now the last paragraph of the Critique of Pure Reason.

Student: As regards those who adopt a scientific method. They have the choice of proceeding either dogmatically or skeptically. But in any case they are under obligation to proceed systematically. I may cite the celbrated Wolf as a representative of the former mode of procedure, and David Hume as a representative of the latter, and may, then, in conformity with my present purpose leave all others unnamed. The critical path alone is still open.

Strauss: The critical in contradistinction to the dogmatic and the skeptical. Yes?

Student: If the reader has the courtesy and the patience to accompany me along this path, he may now judge for himself whether if he cares to lend his aid in making this path into a high road It may not be possible to achieve before the end of the present century what many centuries have not been able to accomplish. Namely, to secure for human reason the complete satisfaction in regard to that with which it has all along so eagerly occupied itself."

Strauss: So in other words, the perfect satisfaction of reason is imminent. There is, then, something like a history of progress, of a single process leading from original barbarism and obscurantism to the complete satisfaction of reason. To appreciate this fact, let us contrast it with the parallel in Aristotle. Metaphysics, Book , 1074B, 1-14. Please read that.

Reader: "Our forefathers in the most remote ages have handed down to their posterity the tradition in the form of a myth that these bodies are gods and that"

Strauss: By"these bodies" he means the heavenly bodies.

Student: "And that the divine encloses the whole of nature. The rest of the tradition has been added later in mythical form with a view to the persuasion of the multitude and to its legal and utilitarian expediency. They say these gods are in the form of men like some of the other animals and they say other things consequent on and similar to these which we have mentioned."

Strauss: In other words, the common view of the times . . . Yes?

Reader: "If one were to separate the first point from these additions and take it alone, that they thought the first substances to be gods, one must regard this as an inspired utterance and reflect that, while each art and each science has often been developed as far as possible and has again perished, these opinions with others have been preserved until the present like relics of the ancient treasure. Only thus far, then, is the opinion of our ancestors and our earliest predecessors clear to us."

France and England. This much about some of the reasons why our present concerns lead us to the common concern with Kant. Those concerns our ours are, however, not Kant's concerns. They are not his primary and overriding concern.

What, then, was Kant's concern? We can say without the fear of being contradicted immediately that Kant was concerned with the metaphysics and ethics, but in such a way that ethics was no longer to be understood as based on metaphysics, but rather the basis of metaphysics.

Now let us read some other statements of Kant. You see we have to do quite a bit of original readings. In the Modern Library edition, if you will turn to page 42 you will find a statement of Kant which is quite clear.

Reader: "Since the attempts of Locke and Leibnitz, or rather since the first rise of metaphysics . . . and all its pretended a priori knowledge nothing but common experiences mislabeled; which is to say that no such thing as cause and effect exists at all."

Strauss: Let us go on to page 45, the second paragraph.

Student: "If readily confess that the reminder of David Hume . . . on can bring it further than was possible for the acute man whom one has to thank for the original sparks of its light."

Strauss: Let us stop here. So this sentence challenges the reflections of David Hume, although it was exactly that which interrupted many years ago the dogmatic slumber and "gave to my investigations in the field of speculative philosophy an entirely different direction." So important was Hume to Kant. In order to get some notion of the purport of this statement, let us consider the following thing. What had happened in the 18th century - speaking especially of Protestant Germany but not only there - was the apparent victory of the rationalistic enlightenment over revered religion. There were two kinds of such rationalism: the moderate one preponderant in the universities and the greatest man among them was Christian Wolff to whom I referred before. This moderate view accepted the notion of a natural or rational theology, demonstrations of the existence of God and so on as an evidently possible thing. There was also a radical enlightenment which is presented most obviously by Voltaire and which was much more skeptical regarding rational theology. Then there was, as it were, to the left of Voltaire materialistic atheism of some French writers. Behind this radical enlightenment there is one outstanding figure and that is Hobbes. So either the moderate or the radical rationalism were definitely victorious prior to Kant.

Hume is not exactly opposed to that rationalism. In other words, Hume is not exactly an orthodox Christian. But the important point in Hume which had such a deep influence on Kant is this: That Hume questioned the basis of that rationalism. The key point mentioned by Kant is causality is not rational. Hence, of course, the demonstration of the existence of God as the first cause cannot be rational. Hume questions - and that is the way in which Kant understood him - both metaphysics as a rational science and natural science at the same time. Whether Hume was fully aware of this indication is another matter. That is the way in which Kant

understood him. We have to consider for a moment the general character of Kant's reply to Hume. Kant's diagnosis - if one can use that term - of the situation is this: Both the dogmatists of the past including Leibniz and Locke, and that skeptic David Hume had overlooked one kind of judgements. There are, according to Kant, first two kinds of judgements which he calls analytical and synthetic. Analytical judgement is a judgement in which the predicate is implied in the subject. Say, all bodies are extended. That is an analytical judgement because "body" when you analyze it is extended. But, say, some cats are black. That, on the other hand, is a synthetic judgement because the concept of "cat" does not imply the concept of "blackness." You all know that there may be white and ginger cats, for example. The analytic judgement causes no serious problems because, since they only spell out what is implied in the subject concept, their truth or untruth is fully guaranteed by the principle of contradiction. You contradict yourself if you say that there are bodies which are not extended.

In the synthetic judgements, as we have seen in the case of the cat, the statement, "Some cats are black" is not guaranteed by the principle of contradiction because to say, "Some cats are not black is not a self-contradictory assertion. It is vouched for by experience. We look around among cats and find that some cats are black.

According to Kant's intepretation, pre-Kantian philosophy admitted only these kinds of judgement. And, then, for example, causality would have no basis because causality would not be an analytical judgement. That every event should have a cause is not an analytical statement. There is no contradiction in asserting that there are events which have no cause. That was the point which Hume had made. Nor can it be based on experience because experience can only tell us that as far as I have seen I found that every event had a cause, but how few cases of events did we investigate. Therefore the universality of that proposition cannot be based on experience. The great difficulty which is still with us up to the present day.

Kant, therefore, makes a distinction between two kinds of synthetic judgements. Synthetic judgements which are derivative from experience - some cats are black - no problem. And another kind of synthetic judgements which are not derivative from experience and, therefore, can be universally valid for ever and ever. And that is synthetic judgements <u>a priori</u>, as Kant calls it. That is the key assertion of Kant and, in a way, the whole understanding of Kant's philosophy turns around this assertion that there are synthetic judgements <u>a priori</u>.

You could read, for example, paragraph 2 in the <u>Prolegomena</u> and the corresponding passage in the Introduction to the <u>Critique of Pure Reason</u> on page 24 of the Modern Library edition and following.

So there are, then, according to Kant synthetic judgements <u>a priori</u> - judgements which are not merely implied in the concept of the subject nor based on experience. Rather, they have this peculiarity: that they are limited only to making possible the whole sphere of experience. What Kant calls the phenomenal world.

We cannot understand and investigate phenomenal things without presupposing such synthetic judgements a priori. On the other hand, the application of synthetic judgements a priori is strictly limited to the phenomenal world. In other words, physics has a solid basis - natural science altogether has a solid basis - contrary to Hume's assertion that causality is derivative from some association of ideas and, therefore, doesn't have a solid ground. But metaphysics is impossible because metaphysics does not deal with the phenomenal world, but with things transcending the phenomenal world. Kant calls it things in themselves as distinguished from the phenomenal.

So the Critique of Pure Reason both establishes and limits the competence of science. We might perhaps look at paragraph 36 of the Prolegomena. Read the heading first.

Reader: "How is Nature itself Possible?"

Strauss: And then toward the end.

Reader: "The intellect does not derive its laws (a priori) from nature but prescribes them to nature."

Strauss: That is the key assertion of the Critique of Pure Reason as a whole. The very concept of nature originates in the human understanding. Some of you who read Nietsche's view that physics-modern physics-is only one interpretation of the world among many. This presupposes Kant's Critique of Pure Reason. Kant, of course, says that Victorian physics is the interpretation of the world among many, but nature originates in human understanding.

Nature is questioned by Kant in his theoretical philosophy, in the Critique of Pure Reason. And this leads to the questioning of human nature as the basis of ethics as we will see by and by.

But, however important Hume was for Kant, there was another pre-Kantian thinker who was even more important for him. Metaphysics - the science of God, the soul and the world, as it was understood in Kant's time - implies from the very beginning the view that the theoretical or contemplative life is the highest life. This was not admitted by Hume. Naturally not, because there was no metaphysics for Hume. Nor was it admitted by Hobbes for similar reasons. But metaphysics implies the supremacy of the theoretical life.

Now let us hear an utterance of Kant which suffers for credence because Kant never published this in his lifetime. This was found among relatively early notes of Kant after his death. I will try to translate this from the German. "I am an enquirer" I do not want to use the term "researcher" after the degradations his work has undergone. "I am an enquirer from inclination. I feel the whole thirst for knowledge and the greedy unrest to make advances in that are also the contentedness as every progress. There was a time when I believed all this could make out the glory of mankind and I despise the vulgar which knows of nothing" meaning which has no theoretical interest of any kind. Now comes the key sentence. "Rousseau has brought me into the right shape. This imagined on blind preference" - namely of the in-

quirers above the non-inquirers, disappears. I learned to honor men and I would regard myself as much more useless than the common laborers if I did not believe that this reflection" - the consideration in which he engages - " could give all others a value to restore or to establish the rights of mankind." That is a remarkable statement and this obviously goes much further than the praise of Hume in the Prolegomena which we have read.

Kant refers here implicitly to Rousseau's so-called First Discourse in which Rousseau asserts that the progress of science and the arts has not contributed to the moral improvement of men, but rather to the moral decay of men. The standard for Rousseau is here virtue meaning moral virtue or, as he also says, the conscience. Therefore he questions the arts and sciences from the point of view of morality. The argument of this First Discourse is very complex and I cannot possibly state it here. I have tried to disentangle the various threads in Natural Right and History pages 255-63. According to Rousseau, morality is supreme, and morality is here understood, as is clear from the passage I quoted, as respect for the rights of mankind. According to Rousseau, however, morality is still based on metaphysics and this seems to distinguish him from Kant. Rousseau said himself that his greatest and best work is the Emile or On Education. In that work there occurs a section called "The Profession of Faith of the Savoyan Vicar." There this vicar gives a proof of the existence of God, the immortality of the soul and the freedom of the will. From these fundamental verities of a metaphysical nature, the vicar deduces maxims for his conduct and rules which he must prescribe to himself in order to fulfill his destiny on earth according to the will of God. Yet these rules, as well as the premises from which they are derives, do not stem from a "high philosophy," but they are engraved in the hearts of men by nature in the conscience as distinguished from reason. There are innate principles of justice and virtue which have the character of sentiments in contradistinction to judgements or ideas which come from without. Sentiments come from within. They are matters of faith. Without faith, no genuine virtue. It is explicitly stated. There are lovers by nature of virtue and doing well, the common good, or to the whole whose center is God in contradistinction to self-interest. They are pleasures of the soul in contradistinction to the pleasure of the senses. This vicar who makes this long speech teaches natural religion as distinguished from positive or real religion. He rejects positive religion insofar as positive religion claims to be of divine origin and obligatory for all men. In other words, in a subsidiary fashion, he has nothing against that.

There are also other heresies committed by the vicar. For example, he doubts that the world was created out of nothing. He questions the reasonableness of prayer, etc. Yet this man is outwardly a Catholic priest who keeps his faith or his infidelity secretly. His faith is based not on reason, but on the sentiment. It is admittedly opposed by insoluble objections, but the heart and the sentiment is so strong that it is not affected by these objections. But the most important consideration is this: Is the profession of faith of the vicar Rousseau's own profession of faith?

I will say only one word about the context. Emile, an ordinary man who has been brought up by Rousseau and has never heard even the very word "God" throughout his childhood. That is because nothing should be said which the boy does not understand from his own experience. Then he reaches sexual maturity and the question arises as to whether he will be able to withstand the torrent of passion on the basis of these principles of conduct which he acquired as a non-mature human being. In this context religion and its sanction is introduced. So this much about the very questionable chracter which the metaphysics has acquired already in Rousseau. I cannot go further into that.

I must, however, say something more about Rousseau and no necessarily about the Savoyan vicar, but about the Social Contract. I will do this next time. Because without some inkling of what Rousseau was after one does not have the proper access to Kant.

Seminar on Kant: Session II
April 6, 1967

I explained last time that we are planning to discuss Kant and the philosophy of history. More precisely, What is it that prevents Kant from making the philosophy of history a part of his system? This question is all the more urgent as the philosophy of history has occupied Kant's thought as we see from some of the titles of the essays in this volume which I put on the reading list.

Before we can settle this question we must have a general idea of what Kant's concern is. What is the concern peculiar to Kant? We will get the first inkling of this by listening to what he says on the two older contemporaries to whom he owed most. These men were Hume and Rousseau. Of Hume he said that he had awakened him from the dogmatic slumber. Hume had done this by questioning the rational character of the principle of causality and, therewith, the rational character of science. Kant's reply has this general character: that there are a kind of judgements which haven't been seen as such - the synthetic judgements a priori. And the principle of causality together with other principles of this kind belong to these fundamental judgements a priori. These judgements are universally and necessarily valid for all possible experience, but only for all possible experience. Therefore science is possible as a radically rational pursuit, whereas theoretical metaphysics is impossible because it goes beyond the limit of all possible experience. I add the eptithet "theoretical." It is, in a way, redundant. Metaphysics is, by its nature, theoretical. The metaphysics which Kant particularly has in mind is the doctrine of God, the world, and the soul. I use the term "theoretical" in an anticipatory way because Kant asserts that metaphysics is possible on a practical moral basis.

This brings me to the second of these great men to whom Kant refers - Rousseau. Kant says that Rousseau brought him into the right shape which is something more than awakening him from the dogmatic slumber. Rousseau questioned what was taken for granted by the whole tradition of metaphysics, the supremacy of the theoretical life, and asserted the supremacy of the moral or practical life, a key point in Kant's thought as we will see very soon.

There is a very complicated question into which I cannot go now: Whether there have ever been thinkers who asserted the supremacy of the moral life prior to Kant. The name of Socrates will come to mind almost immediately. I cannot go into that now.

The question which we have to address to Rousseau especially is: What is the basis of the supremacy of the moral life? After all, the mere assertion will not help. We receive an answer from Rousseau's most explicit and lengthy metaphysical statement, "The Profession of Faith of the Savoyan Vicar." Here, indeed, we find that morality is derived from metaphysics, i.e. theoretical metaphysics. But this theoretical metaphsics is greatly modified

and mollified. It is no longer that proud science taught at universities, but something rather humble located in the heart of everyone rather than in the intellect.

This solution was, of course, unacceptable to Kant because it left the status of metaphysics unclear. Yet Rousseau delineated an alternative in his Social Contract and this alternative we have to discuss very briefly. I mentioned towards the end of the last class that it is very doubtful whether one can identify the Savoyan vicar and his profession of faith with Rousseau. After all, the Savoyan vicar is a character of Rousseau and not Rousseau. It is, I think you can say, similar to Hamlet to Shakespeare. There are also other reasons which make it doubtful. Therefore let us consider briefly the Social Contract.

In "The Profession of Faith" it was made clear that there is a radical difference between self love and love of the whole or love of order. The whole could be the society and it could be ultimately the universe. The social contract is based unmistakably on self love along in the form of self-preservation. Here Rousseau simply follows Hobbes. Just as in Hobbes, the self-preservation is understood as most clearly visible, as it were, in the state of nature. That is also a Hobbian thought. The state of nature - the state antedating all human institutions - is according to Hobbes, pre-social, but rational. These are rational creatures who have not yet made the social contract. According to Rousseau, however, man in the state of nature, because he is pre-social, is also pre-rational. As he puts it, man is a stupid animal. Now this creates a great difficulty. How can natural right - the right belonging to the state of nature - be the standard of human action if man in the state of nature is a stupid animal?

Rousseau would probably have an answer to this question along these lines: The desire for self-preservation affects all living beings, not only men. But whereas the other living beings are concerned with self-preservation, man alone can know this and, therefore, try consistently to act on that principle which brutes cannot do.

However this may be, there is another difference between Rousseau and Hobbes of which Rousseau was fully aware and we should read that. The Social Contract, Part I, Chapter 6. Rousseau gives here in the fourth paragraph the formula which the Social Contract has to solve. Will you read that?

Reader: "This difficult question may be restated in terms appropriate to my inquiry as follows: 'Is a method of associating discoverable which will defend and protect with all the collective might the person and property of each associate, and in virtue of which each associate, though he becomes a member of the group, nevertheless obeys only himself and remains as free as before?'"

Strauss: In other words, while becoming a member of society he should remain as free as he was in the state of nature. Yes?

Reader: "This is the problem - a basic one - for which the Social Contract provides a solution. The terms of this contract are dictated by the nature . . . and the association would thus become useless if not tyrannical."

Strauss: Let us stop here. Here the difference between Rousseau and Hobbes is crucial. For Hobbes preserves the natural liberty of the subjects in the civil state. Leviathan, Chapter 21. Rousseau demands that there be a complete surrender of all rights and forces of every individual to society for which he has been called a totalitarian. Whether this is fair or not we will see later. Rousseau's point is this: If you preserve natural rights within society against society as Hobbes and, of course, Locke too had said, then you have in principle a state of anarchy because then you will be the judge also of your natural rights, and your judgement may disagree with that of society. The only way out, according to Rousseau, is to construct society according to natural right so that there will be no appeal possible to natural right. Society cannot possible infringe upon the natural right of man and therefore a complete reconciliation of the individual and society is achieved. A society constructed according to natural right is a society in which everyone is subject to the positive law and must have a say in the making of that law. Say, in an absolute monarchy no one except the king - and he is not subject to the law - no one but he has a say in the making of the law. In qualified republics many people are subject to the law without having had a say in its making. But in a democracy, and especially in a direct democracy which Rousseau has in mind, there is no one who has not had his say in the making of the law who is subject to the law.

Rousseau's conclusions lead up to extraordinary statements. For example in Part II, Chapter III the key point is this, and Rousseau must not say less than this without contradicting himself blatantly. In such a society there cannot be unjust laws. Hobbes said the same, but he could not consistently maintain it because he was forced to make a distinction between, let us say, inequitable laws and unjust laws. Every law is just, but some laws may be inequitable. This is really just a semantic solution. In Rousseau's Book II - would you read that?

Reader: "It follows from the above that the general will is always well-intentioned, that is that it always looks to the public good. It does not follow, however, that the people's deliberations are invariably and to the same extent what they ought to be. Men always will what is good for them, but do not always see what is good for them. The people is never corrupted but is frequently misinformed. And only when it is misinformed does it give the appearance of willing what is bad for it. It often happens that the will of everybody because it is looking to private interest and is thus merely a sum of particular wills is something quite different from the general will which looks exclusively to the common interest."

Strauss: Let us stop here. Thank you very much. So there is, then, in Rousseau - as he admits - that even under the best conditions there is a tension between the private good and the common good. Calculation may tell me that I could not preserve

myself in the state of nature as well as I can preserve myself within society. But there are all kinds of complications. For example, quite a few people are trying to defraud the government of taxes, although they know very well that without taxes there would be no police and so on. So the tension between the public good and the private good remains. Regarding this point, let us read another section in the first part of the Social Contract, Chapter VIII.

Reader: "Concerning the Civil State. The transition from the state of nature to the civil state produces a quite remarkable transformation within man. That is, it substitutes justice for instinct as the controlling factor in his behavior and confirms upon his actions a moral significance which they have"

Strauss: No, no. That is "the morality which they lacked before." In other words, man in the state of nature did not have morality. That comes into being only with the emergence of civil society.

Reader: "Only when this transformation has come about does the voice of duty take the place of physical motivation and law that of appetite. Only then, therefore, does man who hitherto has considered himself alone find himself obliged to act on other principles."

Strauss: Forced. Because obliged has a certain moral connotation which force does not have to have. Yes?

Reader: "forced to act on other principles and to consult his reason before . . . and made out of a stupid and dull-witted animal an intelligent being, a man."

Strauss: So great is the difference between the civil state and the state of nature. He was not yet a man before and the most important thing which he acquired is morality because previously he was concerned only with his own good and that is not immoral, but amoral or premoral. Now go on.

Reader: "Let us reduce the items on each side of the ledger to terms easy to compare. Man loses through the social contract his natural liberty along with an unlimited right to anything that he is tempted by and can get."

Strauss: So that is what Hobbes says. That this right men have in the state of nature. Yes?

Reader: "He gains civil liberty along with all he possesses. Lest we fail to grasp the extent of his gains, however, we must distinguish sharply between natural liberty which is limited only by the individual's own powers and civil liberty which is limited by the general will."

Strauss: The general will which expresses itself in law. Yes?

Reader: "As also upon possession which rests either upon might or upon the right of the first occupant, and ownership which can have no basis other than positive title."

Strauss: Positive title derivative from positive law. Yes?

Reader: "Nor is that all. One might add to the gains from the civil state that of moral freedom."

Strauss: Moral liberty in contradistinction to natural or civil liberty. Yes?

Reader: "in the absence of which nothing can make man truly his own master. For just as motivation by sheer appetite is slavery, so obedience to self-imposed law is liberty."

Strauss: So that is the formula fertile in consequence which will appear with very great emphasis in Kant. Obedience to the law which one has prescribed to onself is liberty.

In a way this is also true of civil liberty insofar as in a decent civil society you are subject only to laws to the making of which you have contributed. But we know that this is not necessarily true because you may be voted down. But, in a formal way, the same could be said to be true also of civil liberty.

We must remember the point that there is no morality in the state of nature.

How does this all work out in civil society itself? An ordinary calculation of our advantages will induce us to join civil society. But how are we going to behave in civil society? How are we going to act as citizens? The acts of the citizens and the fundamental acts for all civil society are the acts of legislation. How are we going to vote? For or against the bill? And why is this voting for a bill of such crucial importance?

Let us take a simple example. Someone proposes a law prohibiting all taxes. Our self-interest is surely in favor of it. I don't want to pay taxes. But then I make a simple reflection. I say to myself, "If no one were to pay taxes how could we build roads and so on and so on." Now what do I do in this simple step? I have transformed my desire into a proposed law. I have given the object of my desire the form of a law. Then it is no longer, "I don't want to pay taxes," but "no one should pay taxes." This awakens me from my egoistic slumber. So this is the key point. We begin to think morally at the moment we begin to think of the objects of desire in terms of a universal law. Here we don't need any other principles of natural law, natural inclinations and what have you. The mere act of universalization or rather generalization of our desires makes clear the irrationality of many of our desires and, therewith, the immorality of them. This is of crucial importance for Kant's moral doctrine. The form of law guarantees the rationality of law.

However, as Rousseau will make clear in his book which we cannot read now, this is not quite sufficient. Some other conditions have to be fulfilled and they are stated at length in the Social Contract. We would have to give a seminar on the Social Contract.

Now let us return to Kant. Let us cast a glance at Kant's Critique of Metaphysics and, therefore, at the Critique of Pure Reason. First the plan of the work to get a very crude notion of what it is about. The Critique of Pure Reason if we disregard the Introduction, consists of two chief parts, first - as it is here translated - "The Transcendental Doctrine of Elements," and then "The Transcendental Doctrine of Method." The former is the larger part. "The Transcendental Doctrine of Elements" is subdivided into two parts, "Transcendental Aesthetic" and "Transcendental Analytic." "The Transcendental Analytic" - no, I am sorry. I was mistaken. It is "The Transcendental Aesthetic" and "Transcendental Logic." Then the "Logic" is subdivided into "Transcendental Analytic" and "Transcendental Dialectic." The section which we will discuss first today is taken from the "Transcendental Dialectic."

One question arises immediately. What does "transcendental" mean? This is obviously the key term here. Kant uses the term "transcendental" frequently synonomously with "transcendent" and then it means simply transcending the sensual world. But, nevertheless, he makes a distinction between "transcendental" and "transcendent." This distinctive meaning of "transcendental" is the only one of importance to us.

Let us look at the Modern Library edition, page 36 through 37.

Reader: This is Section VII. "I entitle transcendental all knowledge which is occupied not so much with objects as with the mode of knowledge of objects in so far as this mode of knowledge is to be possible a priori. A system of such concepts might be entitled transcendental philosophy."

Strauss: That is enough for our purpose now. In other words, "transcendental" is not the knowledge of objects - like physics, medicine etc. Rather it has to do with our mode of knowing objects insofar as that knowledge is supposed to be a priori. So he does not deal with our knowledge a posteriori, our empirical knowledge of objects. This is the first definition which Kant gives.

We see already here that the sphere of the transcendental is, for all practical purposes identical with that of the synthetic judgements a priori. One can explain what Kant means with a term not used by Kant, but stemming somehow from the Kantian tradition. The transcendental knowledge is the knowledge of the fundamental project originating in the human mind by virtue of which we can organize, let us say, sense data so that they make sense. This is the key theme of the Critique of Pure Reason, but with the understanding that for Kant himself it was still a question of whether there cannot be metaphysics as a science consisting of synthetic judgements a priori and Kant has to show the impossibility of that metaphysics. This is the function of that division called "Transcendental Dialectic." The distinction between analytics and dialectics goes back to Aristotle. But in Kant's view dialectics has a much lower status than it has in Aristotle and it can be compared to the status of sophistry in Aristotle. But it is not a sophistry in the way Aristotle discussed, i.e. something arbitrary. Rather it is the natural sophistry of the human mind.

The Critique of Metaphysics deals with three ideas of reason. Idea does not mean what it meant in Descartes and Locke and Hume and so on. It had reaquired something of the Platonic meaning. I will perhaps say a word about that. There is an old distinction between the understanding and reason. In Latin it is _____ and _____. In Greek it is _____ and _____. This is the Platonic-Aristotelian distinction. There is a kind of intellectual intuition if one can say that, a grasp of ideas to take the simple, Platonic example - _____, i.e. understanding. And then there is a faculty in man which operates with these insights and also with sensible things known through sense perception. Reasoning. So there is an understanding of the higher. That has been completely changed. In order to understand that the change, we must look at the Leviathan, Chapter IV and V, and what Hobbes says there about understanding and reason.

Understanding has nothing to do with ideas, but with notions, concepts and, ultimately, words. This is, of course, nothing to be proud of. That is only a tool for understanding and not true understanding. The genuine, true understanding is that which comes from the use of these tools, and that is reason. So, then, reason has a much higher status.

Kant accepts this modern view and for Kant reason is higher than the understanding. The understanding is by its nature limited to the field of experience, sense experience. But reason transcends that. Now this transcendence is not in every respect a fault. It is even necessary to transcend and that is what Kant means when he speaks of ideas of reason. These ideas have a certain function, but not a directly cognitive function. The function of the ideas of reason is much clearer in the moral field as we will see, but they also have some function in the theoretical field.

There are three ideas of reason according to Kant. On page 391 B- but we cannot possibly read that. I will only mention this, that these three ideas of reason led prior to Kant (as Kant asserts) to three alleged sciences: rational psychology, i.e. not empirical psychology, cosmology and theology. Therefore, Kant is impelled to engage in a critique of rational psychology - for all practical purposes a proof of the immortality of the soul - rational cosmology, and rational theology - the doctrine of God.

Now in the case of rational psychology and rational theology the situation is relatively simple. Pure reason cannot prove the immortality of the soul and the existence of God. Kant tries to show the weakness of the demonstrations. That is a clear-cut situation because it implies already that while theoretical reason cannot prove the immortality of the soul and the existence of God, the existence of God and the immortality of the soul are possible assertions. Theoretical reason cannot establish them, but for the same reason it cannot refute them.

Much graver is the situation in the case of rational cosmology. In this case we arive at antimonies meaning that two contradictory theses which we must make are both demonstrable. Let us look at the formulation of the antimonies. The first is on page 454 in B.

Reader: "The First Conflict of the Transcendental Ideas. Thesis: The world has a beginning in time and is also limited as regards space."

Strauss: Antithesis.

Reader: "The world has no beginning and no limits in space. It is infinite as regards both time and space."

Strauss: So you see that in each case Kant adds a demonstration. According to Kant's assertion both incompatible theses are demonstrable and here the weakness of theoretical reason becomes particularly manifest, of course.

Now let us look at the formulation of the other antimonies. Page 462.

Reader: "Second Conflict of the Transcendental Ideas. Thesis: Every composite substance in the world is made up of simple parts and nothing anywhere exists save the simple or what is composed of the simple.

"Antithesis: No composite thing in the world is made up of simple parts and there nowhere exists in the world anything simple."

Strauss: Now the next is pages 472 to 473.

Reader: "Third. Thesis: Causality in accordance with laws of nature is not the only causality from which the appearances of the world can be one and all derived. To explain these appearances it is necessary to assume that there is also another causality, that of freedom.

"Antithesis: There is no freedom. Everything in the world takes place solely according to the laws of nature."

Strauss: And the fourth is on page 480.

Reader: "Thesis: There belongs to the world either as its part or as its cause a being that is absolutely necessary."

Strauss: That would be God.

Reader: "Antithesis: An absolutely necessary being nowhere exists in the world nor does it exist outside the world as its cause."

Strauss: This section is of special interest for the reason given. Here the radical weakness of theoretical reason appears most clearly because theoretical reason in perfectly legitimate steps - in genuine demonstrations - proves two contradictory assertions. Therefore, there must be something wrong with theoretical reason in this sphere which Kant explains.

Before he turns to a more detailed discussion, Kant speaks on page 490 of the interest of reason in this conflict of itself.

Reader: "The Interest of Reason in This Conflict."

Strauss: What Kant means by this question of the interest of reason will appear from the table to be read now by Mr. _____ : (inaudible)

How long did it take him to right the Critique of Pure Reason?

Student: About five months.

Strauss: Yes. About five months. Secondly, Kant wrote the first edition of the Critique of Pure Reason in 1781. The second he wrote in 1787 if my memory is correct, and considerable corrections were made then. Such a work as the Critique of Judgement which appeared in 1790 - the idea of that occurred to Kant only about 1787 or 1788. This work of Kant was not planned or laid out from the beginning as the work of Plato may have been laid out at the beginning of his literary activity.

What Kant does here is this: He gives explicitly an impartial discussion of the two parties. An impartial discussion meaning that he compares himself to a jury man who is not convinced in advance that Speck murdered the nurses or did not murder the nurses, but impartially listens to the evidence. That means, of course, as became very clear from Mr. _____'s paper, that the four antimonies - the four theses and the four antitheses - belong together. In other words you cannot have thesis I combined with antithesis III and this kind of thing. They are either/or. They hang together. And the two parties have a very different mood. Mr. _____ refers to the passage in which he says "the coldness of the one side and the other is zealous." So there are two human temperaments, as it were, which reflect themselves in both theses.

The first is called the Dogmatism of Pure Reason and the other is called the Pure Empricism. Pure Empiricism means the denial of every knowledge by pure reason. Only empirical knowledge is possible.

Now what speaks in favor of the dogmatism of pure reason. You must not forget, that is only a provisional consideration because Kant wants to have an impartial, unbiased investigation. He wants to have clarity about his biases. He thinks that these are not only his biases, but the biases of every sane and sensible man. Now what speaks in favor of the dogmatism of pure reason is that is supports morality and religion. Secondly, it is speculatively attractive. Thirdly, it is popular.

Empricism, on the other hand, for Kant has only one very important recommendation. It is in agreement with the spirit of natural science and for Kant natural science is a perfection of our natural understanding, the perfection. It demands empiricism. Kant says, however, (I do not know if you have pointed that out) that empiricism as such leaves room for morality and religion. Let us consider that. Do you know where the passage is? The real empiricist who says, "I want to investigate nature according to the inherent laws of such an investigation" leaves men the freedom to think non-empirically about matters which are not subject to natural science, i.e. morality and religion. But, unfortunately, empiricism itself becomes dogmatic and, therefore, denies that there is any rationality outside of science.

Now let us read this passage on the bottom of page 499.

Reader: "The contrast between the teaching of Epicurus and that of Plato."

Strauss: Kant simply says, "This is simply the contrast between epicureanism and platonism."

Reader: "It is, however, open to question whether Epicurus ever propounded these principles as objective assertions. If perhaps they were for him nothing more than maxims with the speculative employment of reason, then he shows in this regard a more genuine philosophical spirit than any other of the philosophers of antiquity."

Strauss: What a praise and of Epicurus of all people. Yes?

Reader: "That, in explaining the appearances, we must proceed as if the field of our inquiry were not circumscribed by any limit or beginning of the world then we must assume the material composing the world to be such as it must be if we are to learn about it from experience, then we must postulate no other road of the production of events than one which will enable them to be regarded as determined through unalterable laws of nature. And, finally, that no use must be made of any cause distinct from the world. All these principles still retain their value. They are very sound principles, though seldom observed for extending the scope of speculative philosophy"

Strauss: "Speculative philosophy" is still used in a very loose sense, the same as "speculative science." Yes?

Reader: "while at the same time enabling us to discover the principles of morality without depending for this discovery upon alien ideas, non-moral, theoretical"

Strauss: This is an impudent addition of the translator. "Alien" means here as Mr. _____ understood it, (inaudible)

Reader: "And it does not follow in the least that those who require us - so long as we are occupied with mere speculation - to ignore these dogmatic propositions can justly be accused of wishing to deny them."

Strauss: In other words, a natural scientist who does not take cognizance of any divine interventions, miracles etc. in his capacity as a natural scientist, cannot for this reason be accused of being an atheist. Today, of course, this is elementary, but was not so elementary in Kant's time.

Here Kant illustrates what he means by this opposition of empiricism and dogmatism by identifying empiricism with Epicurus and dogmatism with Plato. Now I think that this identification of dogmatism with Plato we have seen repeated by Nietsche and is very plausible at first glance. But as for Epicurus it is quite strange. Epicurus taught the freedom of the will in the doctrine of the declination of atoms so that all atoms and, therefore, also the atoms constituting our minds have an irreducible, inexplicable power to change their courses. Of course, Epicurus never meant these assertions about the eternity of the world and the universe,

and the infinity of the universe as mere fundamental hypotheses, but he meant them as objective assertions. But he could rightly say that he isn't the author of these things. That was done by a fellow named Hooker in Germany at that time. And who is interested in these boring things should read _____. Nevertheless, the good press that Epicurus gets here is very interesting because this was a great part of the development since the 17th century from Bacon on. Epicurus had had a very bad press throughout the tradition. Now suddenly he was rediscovered so much so that a man like Spinoza could say, "The authority of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle does not carry any weight with me. The case is different with me with Democritus, Epicurus and Lucretius." This is a very important part of modernity and it is good always to remind ourselves of that. One can say, however, that Kant idealizes Epicurus. He idealizes him in Kant's sense. Whether Epicurus would have regarded it as an improvement is another question.

I believe that it would be more simple to say that the opposition which Kant has in mind is materialism and spiritualism. But Kant replaces, as it were, materialism by empiricism and the primary alternative is that of materialism and spiritualism. This fundamental alternative is stated very clearly in Plato's Laws. I will give you the passages so that you can look them up. Laws, Book X, 888E to 891C, 892A to C. Plato, or the Athenians stranger, makes the distinction as follows. There are people who assert the supremacy of body, of the four elements, atoms and so forth. This is the one school. The other school is the one which asserts the supremacy of the soul as distinguished from the body.

Kant says here that the one alternative, the supremacy of the body, is unfavorable to morality and religion, and that the second or spiritualism, is favorable to it. But he doesn't make any assertions regarding popularity there.

We can perhaps say that the ultimate opposition intended by these terms is this: Whether the highest in man is akin to the highest simply or whether it is not akin to it. Now let us assume that the highest in man is reason. Then, if God is the cause of everything there is obviously a kinship between the highest in man and God as the most intelligent being. On the other hand, if the highest in the sense of the cause of everything, are blind atoms moving aimlessly, then the highest in man is obviously not akin to the highest. That is, indeed, a very grave problem for every human being.

Now Kant says, then, further (on page 500B) that the virtues of Platonism on the one hand and of Epicureanism on the other - that Epicureanism is more favorable to the understanding of nature because Plato as Kant sees him and not entirely wrongly, of course, would be in favor of using teleological principles in explaining natural phenomena (Phaedo, 96). According to Kant, that is incompatible with natural science.

Of course one would have to raise the question "What about psychology, for example?" Can this be done properly in what Kant calls the Epicurean spirit? Does this not require something like Plato? We do not have to go into that.

Let us read the next paragraph on page 500.

Reader: "As regards the third factor which has to be considered in a preliminary choice between the two parties. It is extremely surprising that empiricism should be so universally unpopular. The common understanding, it might be supposed, would eagerly adopt a program which promises to satisfy it through exclusively empirical knowledge and the rational connections there revealed."

Strauss: Now go to page 502.

Reader: "Thus empiricism is entirely devoid of the popularity of transcendentally idealizing reason and however prejudicious such empiricism may be to the highest practical principles, there is no need to fear that it will ever pass the limits of the schools and acquire any considerable influence in the general life or any real favor among the multitude."

Strauss: That is a remarkable assertion. For Kant the scientific spirit will never become popular and, therefore, also its implications. The multitude will always be attracted by morality and religion and never by science and its implications. If there ever was a prophesy which has been refuted by experience it is this one.

There seems to be an apparently conflicting statement in the Preface to the second edition on page 34 of the second edition.

Reader: "Critique alone can sever the root of materialism, fatalism, atheism, free-thinking, fanaticism and superstition which can be injurious universally."

Strauss: It would seem to me that materialism and atheism can become injurious universally, i.e. they can become popular. But I think that this relative clause refers only to enthusiasm and superstition, and not to the preceding points. Otherwise Kant would really be contradicting himself.

Since we are discussing the Preface to the second edition, let us look at page 33 - that is Roman numeral xxxiii. When he says, "Thus this possession remains undisturbed and it gains even in respect" Do you see that?

Reader: "that the schools are now taught not to presume to possess any higher and more extended insight in a matter of universal human concern than that which is equally within the reach of the great mass of men ever to be held by us in the highest esteem."

Strauss: "Mass of men" is a bad translation. Why not "multitude?" So the multitude which for us is most highly regarded. _____ _____. Now that is a statement which occurs rarely - if at all - in philosophers prior to Kant. That is, of course, the Rousseauan heritage. That the multitude, the people, are most respectable to us. Therefore the popularity concern is very important to Kant. But the people at large are protected sufficiently by the fact that moral reason and the implications of moral reason - belief in God and the immortality

of the soul are as accessible to the simplest man as to the most developed philosophers. That they do not know the sources of comets and more subtle questions, is uninteresting. The dignity of man does not consist in that as Kant has said with the greatest force at the beginning of the Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals which we will read soon.

The fundamental defect of both empiricism and dogmatism is this: Both take the world as a thing in itself. That actually can wait to be discussed until later. Well, I can mention it. On page 535 which Kant makes especially clear regarding these last two antinomies. Both sides take the world as a thing in itself, whereas we can know the world only as a phenomenon. Therefore, that is a resolution of the conflict especially in the case of the last two. For example, the third is the universal validity of the laws of nature and no freedom, and on the other hand there is freedom. The first is true of the phenomenal world. There cannot be any interruption of the system of natural laws. But as far as the thing in itself is concerned there may very well be such causality by freedom. We will have to discuss this when we come to the question of freedom. Then we will hear more about how Kant understands this distinction between the phenomenal world noumenal world, i.e. between the phenomenal world and the true world, and why this is decisive for historicism. This is perhaps the most difficult point to understand in Kant's teaching - the distinction between the phenomenal and noumenal and the coexistence of the two which is possible and imaginable.

Now, are there any questions from this time or last time? Mr.___?

Student: Isn't it a bit strange that there be a section entitled "The Interest of Pure Reason" in the Critique of Pure Reason?

Strauss: I believe I explained that. Kant as a critic, a judge must be impartial. That goes without saying. But no one of us can be impartial if he is not aware of his biases. That is today one of the elementary things in social science. It was always known among thinking people, but today it probably has a fancy name. Therefore, Kant says, "Let us make it clear what we would wish in order to protect ourselves against our biases." That is a perfectly sensible thing. By making this remark Kant throws light on man and human reason. That doesn't do any harm, although it is only a provisional light because the question of which Mr. _____ spoke - What is the basis of morality? - must be answered by Kant. But we can provisionally say that we cannot help making a distinction between decency and indecency in ourselves and others. We cannot imagine human life without that. It is an important consideration. Whether it is the ultimate, decisive consideration may be in question. But we cannot always think and argue on the ultimate level.

Now, are there any other questions?

Student: Isn't it strange that he calls this Pure Reason, rather than Impure Reason or Practical Reason?

Strauss: He says here "of the interest of reason" in this conflict. He doesn't say "of the conflict of pure reason."

Student: So it is a practical consideration?

Strauss: Practical reason is also pure according to Kant. But, still, your objection is not valid. It is the antinomy of pure reason, meaning reason and not merely our desires or our prejudices. Kant means that looking at this conflict it is reasonable to be in favor of empiricism with a view to the progress of natural science. And it is reasonable to take the side of dogmatism from the point of view of morality and religion.

Kant doesn't claim to solve the problem of antinomies here. It is a provisional discussion meant to render possible an impartial examination by making clear and explicit our partialities. And we see that our partiality here is split. What our scientific conscience demands is not in agreement with what our moral conscience demands. And both kinds of conscience must be satisfied. And that Kant has tried to do in his whole work. Yes?

Student: Under Dogmatism of Pure Reason do you think that there is an implied criticism of Hume also?

Strauss: No. Hume would be either a dogmatic empiricist or a skeptic.

Student: What I meant to say is the dogmaticism of empiricism.

Strauss: Yes. (inaudible) a skeptic. That is something else. But that is also not a feasible position according to Kant. Hume surely would not be a dogmatist of pure reason.

Student: Yes. But I meant that in a sense you can't really accuse Hume of being dogmatic towards only what is outside because he is cutting away even empiricism itself.

Strauss: Yes. That is why Kant admired him so much. He was impartial even to science. But whether Hume was fully aware of what he was doing through his critique of causality. That is the question. Yes?

Student: At 494 Kant says that he robs us of all these supports for morals and religion - or at least appears to do so. Does that last qualifying phrase point to at least the possibility of an alliance between empiricism and morality?

Strauss: Could it not mean simply that Kant makes the antitheses the prices of these supports or at least seems to deprive us of them. Kant, as it were, remembering the provision character of these statements tries to be what he says. At first glance the assertion that there is no freedom and that there is no origin of the world and no originator of the world has this effect on morality. Kant doesn't wish here to deepen the issue. He merely says what seems to be the case. I take this to be a minor self-correction in order not to say too much. In fact, Kant speaks here only of appearances.

Seminar on Kant: Session III
April 11, 1967

There is a great question regarding terminology. To take up "philological" first. "Philological" means _____, to our being acted upon in contradistinction to our activity. That is all he means here.

More difficult is "anthropology" as used by Kant. He means by it the empirical study of man, and not what it means now, the study of primitive nations. So all of social science would be "anthropology" in Kant's sense.

More serious is the use of the term "intelligible" because the intelligible character of which Kant speaks here frequently is precisely not intelligible in the ordinary sense of the term. So we would have to use a somewhat different term. The simplest would be to substitute in each case for "intelligible" when occurring in this meaning "noumenal" which is only the Greek for intelligible, but is not used in ordinary parlance and, therefore, the difficulty is semantically avoided. The phenomenal character opposed to the noumenal character. The phenomenal character is the known, of the earth. The intelligible character cannot be known, strictly speaking - the noumenal character.

But it did not become quite clear from your paper how Kant solves this difficulty that there is an unbreakable causal nexus so that every event in the world including every human action is fully determined by precedent causes. And yet there can be freedom. How does Kant reconcile that?

Student: The series of causes which are unbroken occur in the field of appearances and hence in time.

Strauss: But that is a crucial point. That they occur in time is obvious. When we speak of preceding we mean temporal. But the key point is that you speak of appearances. With what right can we speak of appearances?

Student: Every human action that is not pathological has both a phenomenal aspect - that in the field of appearances - and also a noumenal side.

Strauss: Why don't we try to make a picture. (blackboard illustration). Here. This would be the human action which you observe. This holding up of a bank or whatever it may be. Now this is determined by n causes. They come together. But then necessarily they hold up the bank. But this is fully understood, explained and predetermined. This is one side. And we say that it is as much determined as the sun or the rain or whatever it may be.

Student: But if this would be the whole story man would just be like a rock or whatever.

Strauss: Man could not be held responsible.

Student: There would be no morality

Strauss: No responsibility in any sense.

Student: On the other side there is the noumenal character - the thing in itself. It has nothing to do with time.

Strauss: We have a hold-up here. The hold-up is fully explained. But there is no essential difference between the hold-up and the sacrifice of one's life for other human beings. One is as necessarily determined as the other. Both are natural events. Yet in the case of the good deed we are inclined to say that it was a good deed or noble deed, and in the other case we would say that it was an evil deed or a base deed. What do we imply by making this distinction for which there is no reason whatsoever on the level of causality?

Student: He implied what the man ought to have done.

Strauss: So, in other words, we assume now that the act of the hold-up man is caused not by the broken home, but is determined by evil choice. He could as well have made the right choice. He ought to have made the right choice. Therefore, the determination which leads to this action does not come from the broken home, but from that evil choice. Beyond that we cannot go. So, in other words, we have here another kind of causality, but a causality through freedom. And this is something which cannot be traced to any other cause. Is this clear? And this action has no beginning. It is non-temporal and yet an action.

These two views are incompatible. I mean, either the broken home and other such factors are a sufficient explanation and we don't need the other, or if this (referring to blackboard) is a sufficient explanation, we don't need that. They contradict each other.

How does Kant get rid of the contradiction? You said it, but I want you to repeat it.

Student: The cause on this side, the broken home etc, we can learn from observing. But for the causality of that cause, or why it acts, we have to look to the noumenal character.

Strauss: No. I am sorry. I believed I had stated it more clearly. The causal explanation is based on a systematic disregard of the moral character of the action. Therefore, then, the moral explanation - the evil choice - is sufficient because there are people who come from non-broken homes and also make hold-ups. There you have a good nature and not a bad nature, but they also commit robberies, etc. So these explanations are all not necessary because of the moral motivation, the moral explanation.

How does Kant make these two incompatible explanations compatible? That is the question.

Student: One is the broken home etc. explanation. It is subject to the categories.

Strauss: Let us go step by step. Let us first use the simple terms for this. This is phenomenal and this is noumenal or concerned with the thing in itself. So the basis of Kant's reconciliation is the distinction between phenomena on the one hand and things in themselves or noumena, on the other. On what is this distinction based?

Student: What we can experience.

Strauss: Well, we cannot experience noumena nor do we experience the phenomena as phenomena. This is already an interpretation. We experience, actions, events, beings of all kinds, but that they are phenomenal - that requires an act of reflection.

Student: Unless it is based on reason.

Strauss: How do we arrive at that? That is the work of the Transcendental Analytics and Transcendental Aesthetics - to show that all our understanding is based on specific premises, expecially temporality and spaciality which are essential not to all understanding, but only to human understanding. This is all spacial/temporal. Therefore, Kant says, all objects of experience are - as you say - appearances. We can prove that by an imminent analysis of our understanding.

And then Kant goes on to say that no appearances without the cause of the appearances. But this cause of the appearances as appearances can no longer be an appearance, but it must be something being by itself, i.e. the thing in itself or noumenal.

Is this satisfactory?

Student: I can't make any use of it. I have the whole (inaudible) concept.

Strauss: Yes. Perhaps, let us consider a few points.

Let us first take one rather late passage here. See B on page 578. First Kant speaks of our ordinary observation. "As regards this empirical character there is hence no limit" This is a nice man with a strong will or this is a nice man with a weak will or n subdivisions which you might make. Yes?

Reader: "There is no freedom, and yet in the light of this character is the only way that man can be studied. If, that is to say, we are simply observing"

Strauss: "Observing" is written in very fat letters in the original.

Reader: "And, in the manner of anthropology, seeking to institute a physiological exploration into the motive causes of his actions."

Strauss: "Physiological" is here used in the old Greek sense of the word. It means a natural explanation, a scientific explanation. Go on.

Reader: "But when we consider these actions in their relation to reason I do not mean speculative reason by which we endeavor to

explain their coming into being, but reason insofar as it is itself the cause producing them."

Strauss: "Producing" is also underlined. Yes?

Reader: "if, that is to say, we compare them to reason in its practical bearing we find a rule and order altogether different from the order of nature. For it may be that all that has happened in the course of nature and in accordance with its empirical grounds must inevitably have happened ought not to have happened. Sometimes, however, we find or at least believe that we find that the ideas of reason have in actual fact proved their causality in respect of the actions of man as appearances, and these actions have taken place not because they were determined by empirical causes, but because they were determined by grounds of reason."

Strauss: Kant here makes a distinction which does not necessarily presuppose this difficult distinction between phenomena and noumena. This is a distinction between observing or beholding or explaining and acting. We can look at actions - our own or others' - completed. Then we must explain them as necessarily caused by preceding causes. But if we look at an anticipated action, of course especially of ourselves, at an addendum - as something to be done - there the causal explanation is not of the slightest help, as you know. So the causal sciences cannot help us in any important way.

Then we have to look at ourselves in an entirely different way. We have to regard ourselves as responsible. A great practical importance which Kant does not stress, as far as I remember (but which was later on drawn as an inference from Kant), is this. For example, there are quite a few decent, moral people who wish to be held responsible for their actions and don't wish to have their sense of responsibility taken away by psychoanalysis or what have you. Yet when judging others they say that they must consider the broken home and the other things. We must do that or we would be being unjust. So there is a duality of ways of looking at things. It is intelligible and is of use very frequently. And Kant, doubtless, prepares this dualism of looking at things as <u>acta</u> and, therefore, demanding causal explanation and as addenda or things to be done which cannot be understood in causal terms.

Let us try to understand the distinction between phenomena and noumena a little bit more fully without first going into Kant's argument. Now the question is this. The difficulty regarding the idea of the thing in itself was stated most forcefully by Hegel. The main point can be said to be this: How can you say anything about a thing in itself without knowing it to some extent. That can be said to be the core of Hegel's criticism of Kant. So there are very few people who accept this distinction.

But the question is, "Can the unknowable thing in itself be avoided?" Now let us assume that the knowable in the highest and the highest and fullest sense is the scientifically knowable or that which can be validated or invalidated by science - a very common view today. But not everything can be validated or invalidated by scinece. For example, the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, all value judgements. To take the formula of science can discover the "hows" - the how, for example of planetary

motion, but not the "why." There is, then, a sphere of genuine problems which transcends science. We can even say that the most important problems transcend science. For what are any of the scientific problems compared with these questions which I mentioned? That means that one must recognize an unknowable thing in itself. And I believe that this kind of man, the so-called positivist, has no weapon against the distinction. For what they tried to do in my lifetime and in the lifetime of some of you was that they said that statements not susceptible of scientific validation or invalidation are meaningless. In other words, the statement that God is or that God is not, for that matter, is a meaningless assertion. So, too, "The soul is mortal" or "The soul is immortal" is a meaningless assertion. This is, of course sheer nonsense. For everyone who understands the bearing of these assertions - however unfounded they may be - would never regard them as meaningless. This was a trick concealing a dogmatic assertion, namely that what is beyond the power of science does not exist. This, of course, cannot be maintained.

Let us consider a more important criticism of Kant stated in a way which seems to be very light. Nietsche in the _____ _____. Mr. _____.

Reader: "How the true world finally became a fable. The history of an error. 1) The true world attainable for the saved, the pious, the virtuous man. He lives in it. He is it. The older form of the idea, relatively sensible, simple and persuasive. A circumlocution for the sentence: "I, Plato, am the truth."

Strauss: So this was the first stage of the true world. Yes?

Reader: "The true world. Unattainable for now, but promised for the saved, the pious, the virtuous man or for the sinner who repents. In progress of the idea it becomes more subtle, insidious, incomprehensible. It becomes female. It becomes Christian.

"3) The true world. Unattainable, indemonstrable, unpromisable, but the very thought of it a consolation, an obligation, an imperative. At bottom, the old sun, but seen through mist and skepticism. The idea has become elusive, pale, Nordic,_____.

"4) The true world. Unattainable? At any rate, unattained and being unattained, also unknown. Consequently, not consoling, redeeming or obligating. How could something unknown obligate us? Gray morning. The first yawn of reason. The cock crow of positivism.

"5) The true world. An idea which is no longer good for anything, not even obligating. An idea which has become useless and superfluous. Consequently, a refuted idea. Let us abolish it. Right day. Breakfast. Return of _____ and cheerfulness. Plato's embarrassed flush. Pandemonium of all free spirits."

"6) The true world. We have abolished. What world has remained? The apparent one perhaps? No. With the true world we have also abolished the apparent one. Noon. Moment of the briefest shadow. End of the longest error. High point of humanity. _____

Strauss: Now what does Nietsche say? What is the key point here as far as the question is concerned? That we cannot possibly speak as most people in Nietsche's time and Nietsche himself frequently spoke of the phenomenal world unless we presuppose the true world. But if there is no true world we can no longer speak of the phenomenal world. There is only the the world. That is the point. And that, according to Nietsche, is the end of that way leading from Plato to him.

Incidentally, the distinction between the true world and the phenomenal world is, of course, implied in modern science. The whole distinction between primary and secondary qualities - to use Locke's terms - or as Eddington called it in a well-known description: the scientific table and the table we know from our youth. The true table is the scientific table. That means that it has none of the qualities for which it is of any use to us and by which it is known to us.

So Nietsche's view can be stated as follows: against Kant. Kant takes, as has often been said, Newtonian physics for granted. For Nietsche science - Newtonian or post-Newtonian - is only one form among many of world interpretations. Everything which has any meaning has this meaning by virtue of men's creative acts. These creative acts are not fundamentally the same as the pure reason as in Kant, but indefinitely variable - historical. There is no beyond. We cannot go beyond this sphere of human interpretation. There is no beyond, no without. Therefore, it does not make sense to speak of a thing in itself. The utmost one could find, according to Nietsche, beyond or prior to the interpretation would be a meaningless chaos which functions as matter for the creative acts of men. But even here its being understood as chaos is already an interpretation. So we can never go beyond this world of human interpretation, the anthropomorphic world. And the allegedly unanthropomorphic interpretation of the world supplied by modern physics is only a disguised anthropomorphism.

Let us try to understand Kant's point from a slightly different point of view. Kant says that knowledge as distinguished from mere thinking (we can think things which we do not know) is human, only human. This "only" human presupposes some awareness of the character of a possible divine knowledge. On the basis of what we know we are entitled to speak of human knowledge not merely as only human. That is something which Kant borrows from earlier thought and of which it is a question: whether it is sufficiently established by his own thought.

Kant's discussion of freedom in the Critique of Pure Reason presupposes natural science as the perfection of the human understanding. In other words, when some shepherd in some out of the way mountain range feeds his sheep, he does in principle the same as what Newton did. He is only very limited. He does not apply this way of approach which he follows by giving this particular food to the sheep and not others. He doesn't apply it, for example to comets and other far-fetched objects.

So natural science is the perfection of the human understanding. But this has become a question since the time of Kant. Is modern natural science the perfection of the natural understanding or is it not rather a specific modification of it? In the moment

it proves to be a specific modification and not the perfection the question becomes more necessary than ever before: Why science? The question which was raised by Nietsche with greater emphasis than by anybody else.

This question cannot be answered scientifically. It cannot be answered rationally even for the very simple reason that if it could then we would have a rational value judgement to the effect that science is good. And, as you know, this is strictly forbidden. There is no such thing. Science not merely as the profession of some individuals, but as an approach, an outlook if freely chosen. There are no necessary reasons. And that is a very remarkable thing. It is, in a way, a vindication of Kant because it shows us that when we analyze the human understanding or science, the fundamental fact at which we eventually arrive is not time and space and the categories and other things mentioned in the Critique of Pure Reason, but the abyss of freedom. Science itself is secondary, derivative, compared with the fundamental choice. The primary thing is freedom.

Now perhaps we will understand better what Kant means when he says that the scientific world is the phenomenal world. Freedom is noumenal. It belongs to the deepest stratum.

From today, observations and reflections like those I sketched show that however difficult or even unintelligible Kant's doctrine of the thing in itself and, particularly, of the relation of the noumenal to the empirical character of man may be, contains some things which are still carrying great conviction for many of our contemporaries.

Let us now turn to a discussion of the assignment. Kant makes first a distinction between two kinds of causality: causality from nature and causality from freedom. The causality according to nature means that the cause is always the effect of a preceding cause. And the causality from freedom means the faculty to begin a state simply. That is on page 561B.

Reader: "By freedom, on the other hand, in its cosmological meaning I understand the power of beginning a state spontaneously."

Strauss: I.e., freedom thus understood is a pure, transcendental idea. That means that it wholly transcends all possible experience. Why does reason create for itself this idea? That is a bit later.

Reader: "But since in this way no absolute totality of condition determining causal relations can be obtained, reason creates for itself the idea of a spontaneity which can begin to act of itself without being required to be determined to action by an antecedent cause in accordance with the law of causality."

Strauss: In other words, in the causal speculation. We are confronted with an indefinite regress. This is the cause. But this is itself caused and so on. And reason is dissatisfied with that. Therefore it creates the idea of cause which does not any longer have a cause. Of course this is wholly useless for our knowledge

which is empirical knowledge. But let us read on. It is a bit later, page 562, beginning.

Reader: "Freedom in the practical sense is the will's independence of coercion through sensuous impulses. For will is sensuous insofar as it is pathologically affected by sensuous motives. It is animal if it can be pathologically necessitated. The human will is certainly an arbitrium . . ."

Strauss: The literal translation would be "arbitrariness."

Reader: "The human arbitrarieness is certainly an arbitrium sensitivo, not, however, brute, but free. For sensibility does not necessitate its action. There is in man a power of self-determination independently of any coercion through sensuous impulses. Obviously, if all causality in the sensible world were mere nature every event would be determined by another in time in accordance with necessary laws. Appearances in determining the will would have in the actions of the will their natural affect and would render the actions necessary. The denial of transcendental freedom must, therefore, involve the elimination of all practical freedom. For practical freedom presupposes that, although something has not happened, it ought to have happened and that its cause in the field of appearance is not, therefore, so determined that it excludes a causality of our will, a causality which independently of those natural causes, even contrary to their force and influence, can produce something that is determined in the time order in accordance with empirical laws and which can, therefore, begin a series of events entirely of itself."

Strauss: So, in other words, this transcendental freedom or - as Kant also said formally - freedom in the cosmological understanding. A pure or mere idea of reason, i.e. it is necessary for reason to create this idea, but it cannot be of use theoretically. But this transcendental idea of freedom is the basis of the practical concept of freedom. And Kant makes clear in this passage what freedom in the practical sense is.

The problem which he indicates in the sequel is not physiological or psychological, but transcendental. That is to say, Kant could also have said that this is not something ontological. It is transcendental meaning that it cannout be thought without taking into consideration the distinction between phenomenal and noumenal. He will make this clear in the sequel.

Let us now read on page 564, the first paragraph.

Reader: "The difficulty which then meets us in dealing with the question regarding nature and freedom is whether freedom is possible at all, and if it be possible, whether it can exist along with the universality of the natural law of causality. Is it a truly disjunctive proposition to say that every effect in the world must derive either from nature or from freedom? Must we not rather say that in one and the same event in different relations both can be found?"

Strauss: In other words, it is not a true distinction because they refer to different spheres. Every effect in the world stems from

nature. It belongs to the phenomenal world and some effects in the world stem from freedom. They belong to the noumenal sphere. If temporal, spacial events were things in themselves there could be no freedom. But, Kant says having proved this or having believed that he had proved this in the "Transcendental Aesthetics," space and time are only phenomena. Hence, they must have causes that are not phenomena - intellectual causes, noumena. I repeat that this noumenal causality is transtemporal. Let us take a passage on page 569.

Reader: "In its noumenal character, though we can only have a general concept of that character."

Strauss: I.e., no knowledge of it. We can only thing about it.

Reader: "This same subject must be considered to be free from all influence of sensibility and from all determination through appearances. In as much as it is noumenal nothing happens in it. There can be no change requiring dynamical determination in time. Therefore, no causal dependence upon appearances and, consequently, since natural necessity is to be met with only in the sensible world, this active being must in its actions be independent of and free from all such necessity. No act begins in this act of being itself. But we may yet quite correctly say that the active being of itself begins its effects in the sensible world. In so doing we should not be asserting that the affect in the sensible world can begin of themselves. They are always predetermined through antecedent empirical conditions, thought solely through their empirical character which is no more than the appearance of the noumenal. And, so, are only possible as a continuation of the series of natural causes. In this way freedom and nature in the full sense of these terms can exist together without any conflict in the same actions according as the actions are referred to their noumenal or sensible causes."

Strauss: Is this not rather difficult to understand? This noumenal sphere in which nothing happens which is transtemporal. which is tactile. Can there be any action which is transtemporal. It is hard to understand, isn't it?

Sometimes it is helpful to consider the premises, the historical premises, which a thinker makes. Especially in the case of Kant that is unavoidable. Is there any basis for such a notion of transtemporal and yet active. In the tradition antedating Kant?

Student: Aristotle.

Strauss: The whole theological tradition. God and the blessed. Of course, this would not entitle Kant to assert it, but it is hard to understand Kant without taking into consideration this possibility that he did make such borrowings from the tradition. Mr. _____?

Student: Doesn't the Biblical tradition presuppose that the world was created out of (inaudible)

Strauss: Not in a literal sense. In other words, Kant would not assert that we must assume that the world was created, say,

5,700 years ago. This he would regard as unfounded. But if we must assume as, according to Kant, we must, that on the basis of morality, i.e. to be consistently moral, if we must assume that there must be a God and that this God is then understood as the ultimate cause, and then the world as a cause, and to that extent a beginning.

Generally speaking, whenever you have this notion of progress in the sense in which it was very common in the 18th century, then there is presupposed a beginning of men on earth. Otherwise you come back to the Aristotelian or Platonic cataclysms and then there is not the one line of progress.

Student: How is the notion of a beginning compatible with the idea that a cause . . .

Strauss: Speculatively we cannot make any use of it. In other words, speculatively Darwin and other such terrible persons are right. But if we would leave it at Darwin and his successors and if this were the whole truth, then morality would be impossible. Morality would be a kind of stimulus and response, an affair of some morbid form of motives. Kant placed no obstacles in the way of causal scientific explanation anywhere. Yet Kant (inaudible) of the whole sphere of science. He had to remove science in order to find room for faith.

Student: But my question is this: On the basis of Kant's own terms and of the Bible it seems that if one presupposes that the world were created by God then, at least in terms of that world, it was created at a point in time.

Strauss: Yes, but that is very hard to say because the Bible doesn't say anything about the time. You introduced into the Bible a question which arose only after the collision of the Bible with Greek science. Surely it doesn't exist in the Old Testament. Secondly, for Kant the Bible is nothing sacrosanct as we will see when we come to his discussions of the first chapters of the Bible in which he discusses what he calls the conjectural beginnings of the universe.

Student: It seems to me that this discussion is not Biblical or Aristotelian. Aristotle's substance is not active. I think that this argument is very reminiscent of Leibniz. Kant doesn't want to say too much about the thing in itself. Just to the degree of which he says here, "New action begins in this act of being itself. But we might quite correctly say that the act of being of itself begins its effects in the sensible world." It seems very much like the discussion of a monad in Leibniz's Metaphysics, or something which can begin acting on its own spontaneously.

Strauss: But that leads to the very complicated question: What is the relation of the monads to the spatial/temporal world? And there is at least the possibility that the monads - that is the way in which Kant understood Leibniz - that the monads are the noumenal world. Hence, transtemporal and trans-spatial. The spatial and temporal world is a phenomenon, as Leibniz says, _____, a well-founded phenomenon, but nonetheless a phenomenon. It is most simple to say that traditional theology

natural theology, not Biblical theology - as it was taught at German Protestant universities especially in the 18th century and as Kant himself taught it in his classes (Kant did not teach in his classes his own philosophy, not because he was afraid to teach it, but this was a contract, i.e. he was paid to teach metaphysics according to the textbooks). According to this view which goes back to much older sources - to scholasticism and ultimately to Augustine - there is no difficulty in asserting that there is activity, actuality. Transtemporal.

Let us go a bit further to page 574.

Reader: "This intelligible ground does not have to be considered in empirical enquiries. It concerns only thought in the pure understanding and, although the affects of this thought and action and the pure understanding are to be met with in the appearances."

Strauss: Or the phenomenal. That is part of the German word Erscheinung which is sometimes translated by "phenomenon" and sometimes by "appearances." What shall we do? We have to make up our minds. "Phenomenon" is only the Latin or Greek term for Erscheinung.

Reader: "These phenomena must, nevertheless, be capable of complete causal explanation in terms of other phenomena"

Strauss: Of complete explanation. So, in other words, this hold-up man is, in principle, completely intelligible by the empirical sciences.

Reader; "We have to take their extremely empirical character as the supreme ground of explanation, leaving entirely out of account their noumenal character, that is the transcendental cause of the empirical character as being completely unknown save insofar as the empirical serves for for its sensible side."

Strauss: So, in other words, when I observe this hold-up man then I explain it causally as we have seen. But I can also regard this nasty character as the sensual side of the choice which he has made, namely of the wicked choice. Yes?

Reader: "Let us apply that to experience. Man is one of the phenomena of the sensible world and insofar one of the natural causes, the causality of which must stand under empirical laws. Like all other things in nature he must have an empirical character. This character ws come to know through the powers and faculties which he reveals in his actions. In lifeless or merely animal nature we find no ground for thinking that any faculty is contingent otherwise than in a merely sensible manner. Man, however, who knows all the rest of nature solely through the senses knows himself also through mere aperception, and this indeed through acts and inner determinations which he cannot regard as impressions of the senses. He is thus to himself on the one hand, a phenomena, and on the other hand in respect of certain faculties the action of which cannot be ascribed to the receptivity of sensibility, a merely noumenal object. We entitle these faculties understanding and reason. The latter in particular we distinguish as quite peculiar from all emprically conditioned

powers. For it views its objects merely in the light of ideas and in accordance with them determines the understanding which then proceeds to make an empirical use of its own similarly pure concepts."

Strauss: This seems to complicate matters a bit. We observe all kinds of things in the phenomenal world without getting into any troubles except when we come to man. Man does not simply belong to the phenomenal world, and because he has understanding and reason. Understanding and reason cannot be explained psychologically, physiologically. Simply stated, understanding and reason are the ground of the phenomenal world and cannot, therefore, be explained in terms of the phenomenal world. Does this make sense?

Take another example. Try to have a psychology of thinking in which you try to understand acts of thinking mechanically. Say, on the basis of stimulus and response or such other things. But assuming that a man makes a perfectly sound syllogism. Can this be understood in terms, say, of stimulus and response? If he makes a blunder then you can say, "Well, he was asleep or was drunk or thought of something else," etc. So errors are in need of an explanation, let us say of a scientific explanation. But correct thinking is not, as such, in need of psychological explanation. This is also something which is implied in what Kant says here.

Man does not simply belong to the phenomenal world by the mere fact that he has understanding and reason. Yes?

Student: Does that mean that understanding and thinking can themselves be understood without reflection upon the phenomenal world?

Strauss: Yes. It cannot. This was a great controversy in the last decades of the 19th century and the first decade of this century between two schools. I know that discussion especially from Germany. I believe that Germany was the main seed, but I believe that it was effective, too, in the other countries. There was a way of thinking called psychologism and psychologism was an attempt to give an account of logic and logical thinking in psychological terms. Psychology was still at that time associationist. The most famous document is the first volume of Logical Investigation. I do not even know whether they are translated into English.

For Kant this question is not immediately relevant, but as this passage shows the understanding and the reason cannot be understood in terms of the phenomenal world and we can give this account which I believe comes closest to what Kant himself meant. To say that they are the ground of the phenomenal world and, therefore, cannot be explained in terms of the phenomenal world.

Student: But these two positions which you outlined wouldn't exhaust the possibilities.

Strauss: Well, not entirely. But then we would have to bust the case wide - if I may use this petty mason expression - we would have to see how these problems appear if we look at them from, say, the Aristotelian or Platonic point of view which we must do.

But I propose that we do that when we come to the primary subject of this course, Kant's moral writings. The Aristotelian psychology is, of course, of an entirely different character than, say, Hume's psychology and psychology stemming from Hume.

Reason and understanding in the theoretical sense transcend the phenomenal world, but not in the same sense as that reason with which we are particularly concerned here, that is to say in the sequel. Go on reading please.

Reader: "That this reason has causality or that we at least represent it to ourselves as having causality, is evident from the imperatives which in all matters of conduct we impose as rules upon our active powers. "Ought" expresses a kind of necessity and of connection with grounds which is found nowhere else in the whole of nature. The understanding can know in nature only what is, what has been or what will be. We cannot say that anything in nature ought to be other than what in all these time relations it actually is. When we have the course of nature alone in view, "ought" has no meaning whatsoever."

Strauss: This is underlying the fact/value distinction today. It is a necessary but not sufficient condition as I have stated earlier. Yes?

Reader: "It is just as absurd to ask what ought to happen in the natural world as to ask what properties a circle ought to have. All that we are justified in asking is, 'What happens in nature?' What are the properties of the circle?' This ought expresses a possible action the grounds of which cannot be anything but a mere concept, whereas in the case of a merely natural action the ground must always be phenomenal. The action to which the 'ought' applies must indeed be possible under natural conditions. These conditions, however, do not play any part in determining the will itself, but only determing the effect and its consequences in the phenomenal. No matter how many natural grounds or how many sensuous impulses may impel me to will, they can never give rise to the 'ought,' but only to a willing which, very far from being necessary, is always conditional. And the 'ought' pronounced by reason confronts such willing with a limit, with an end, nay, more - it forbids or authorizes it. Whether what is willed be an object or a mere sensibility, pleasant or a pure reason, reason will not give way to any ground which is empirically given. Reason does not here follow the order of things as they present themselves in the phenomenal, but frames for itself with perfect spontaneity an order of its own according to ideas to which it adapts the empirical conditions and according to which it declares actions to be necessary even although they have never taken place and perhaps never will take place. And at the same time reason also presupposes that it can have causality in regard to all these actions since, otherwise, no empirical effects could be expected from its ideas."

Strauss: Kant says here, anticipating what he will develop in his criticism of moral philosophy, what the "ought" implies. The "ought" which we presuppose in all moral judgements about ourselves or others. The "ought" implies that this and this "ought" to be done without making any assertions as to whether it has

been done or will be done. It only asserts that there is something in man by virtue of which he is aware that he ought to influence the phenomenal world, to act within the phenomenal world in a certain way without any implications that he will so act. Let us read a little bit later the note on page 579.

Reader: "The real morality of actions, their merit or guilt, even that of their own conduct thus remains entirely hidden from us. Our imputations can refer only to the empirical character. How much of this character is ascribable to the pure effect of freedom, how much to mere nature, that is to faults of temperament for which there is no responsibility, or to its happy constitution the desserts of fortune, can never be determined and upon it, therefore, no perfectly just judgements can be passed."

Strauss: So, in other words, that is the practical meaning of what Kant means when he says that the intelligible character or the intellectual character is unknowable. We cannot know in our own or in any other man's case the true merit or guilt. We cannot judge fairly because this last and irreducible act of freedom is wholly unknowable. It must be presupposed.

You are surprised. And you could say that if a man commits a manifestly beastly action, are we not then entitled to say that he has a wicked motive? That is a difficulty and we will try to face it when we have read more of Kant's moral philosophy.

Student: Surely there is an echo of "Just not lest ye be judged" in that passage.

Strauss: Yes, but Kant says "Don't judge yourself. Don't believe you can judge yourself." Kant doesn't say it that simply. He says that we cannot judge with perfect justice.

There is one other point - the illustration which was already quoted by Mr. _____. Page 582. Let us read that.

Reader: "In order to illustrate this regulative principle of reason by an example of its empirical employment. Not, however, to confirm it for it is useless to endeavor to prove transcendental propositions. Let us take a voluntary action . . ."

Strauss: "Voluntary." That is in German willkurlich which depends upon the arbitrium of man. Yes?

Reader: "A fellow tells a malicious lie, spreading a certain confusion in society. First of all we endeavor to discover the motives to which it has been due and, then, secondly, in the light of these we proceed to determine how far the actions and its consequences can be imputed to the offender. As regards the first question we trace the empirical character of the action to its sources."

Strauss: The broken home and so on. Yes?

Reader: "We proceed in this enquiry just as we should for ascertaining for a given natural effect the series of its determining causes. But although we believe that the action is thus deter-

mined, we nonetheless blame the agent not, indeed, on account of his unhappy disposition nor on account of the circumstances that have influenced him, nor even on account of his previous way of life. For we presuppose that we can leave out of consideration what his way of life may have been, that we can regard the past series of events as not having occurred and the act as being completely unconditioned by any preceeding state."

Strauss: You see now why Kant insists on this absolute beginning beyond time. In every moment, a man - no matter how wicked he has lived before - is a source of original purity. His spirit in him is in no way impaired by his previous conduct. Go on.

Reader: "Our blame, just as if the agent in and by himself began in this action an entirely new series of consequences. Our blame is based on a law of reason whereby we regard reason as a cause that, irrespective of all the above-mentioned empirical conditions, could have determined and ought to have determined the agent to act otherwise. This causality of reason we do not regard as only a cooperating agency, but as complete in itself even when the sensuous impulses do not favor or are directly opposed to it. The action is ascribed to the agent's noumenal character. In the moment when he utters the lie the guilt is entirely his. Reason, irrespective of all empirical conditions of the act, is completely free and the lie is entirely due to its default."

Strauss: That is a very clear statement of that state of things---- which I tried to put here on the blackboard. Both explanations are sufficient and, therefore, there is a clear contradiction which can be resolved, according to Kant, only by ascribing the two explanations to two radically different spheres: the phenomenal on the one hand and the noumenal on the other.

Student: Is this a reconcileable conflict?

Strauss: The antimony exists prior to its resolution. But the resolution - and that is the point which goes through the whole argument - destroys theoretical metaphysics. Because a theoretical metaphysician must assert that one or the other of the two assertions is theoretically true. Kant says that that which is theoretically true - because it is the only condition of coherent explanation of phenomena - is valid only for the phenomenal world. And the other, which is morally true, cannot be asserted theoretically. It can be asserted only on the basis of the moral consciousness. So Kant infers the antinomy.

Seminar on Kant: Session 4
April 13, 1967

Thank you very much. That was a very good paper. There was only one point which did not convince me. You said that Kant criticizes Pascal's wager. I would rather say that he agrees with Pascal, if not with quite Pascal's manner. What does Kant say about wagers and betting?

Student: It is the touchdown of pragmatic belief.

Strauss: He knew that some men are willing to bet, say, one dollar, but when it comes to betting one hundred dollars they become hesitant. So the test of the strength of our pragmatic belief is betting. This has nothing to do with Pascal's doctrine because Kant, at least, would not say that Pascal's problem involves pragmatic concerns, but rather moral beliefs. But regarding his moral beliefs what does it suggest to us about the alternatives. The moral man believes that there will be another life, and this will strengthen his moral life. But what about the immoral man? He will simply say that since there is no God and no future life he will simply say that he will live as he sees fit providing he avoids the earthly judges.

What does Kant say?

Student: He has no certainty that there is no God and no future life.

Strauss: Yes. And is this not fundamentally what Pascal does?

Student: Well, Pascal says that one must wager whereas Kant seems to say that the immoral man . . .

Strauss: No. Kant says, in a way, the same thing. He doesn't speak of wagers. Pascal speaks only of Christianity and not of a future life and God in general. But apart from that is it not the same problem?

Student: Well, it is the same problem, but I think that Kant thinks that he has a better solution to it than that of Pascal.

Strauss: But is it not a confirmation, rather, of Pascal's wager notion? That we cannot be certain and it is more prudent to reckon with this possibility of God and punishment after death?

Student: In that sense, yes.

Strauss: Good. That is the main issue.

Now it has become clear from Mr. _____'s paper how adequate is what Kant himself said about the soul. That which counts ultimately is morality or call it moral wisdom. Theoretical wisdom is strictly subordinate to that. In this most important respect, morality and its essential implications - belief in God and in a future life - the simplest man is in no worse position than the greatest philosopher.

But you reminded us of another man to whom Kant defers by paying him the great honor of taking a motto from his work - Bacon. Bacon was, by the way, also highly admired by Rousseau. This perhaps helps us understand Kant's teaching as presented in this section and, in a way, in his whole work. Of course we must take a broad view of Bacon and not limit ourselves to what Bacon explicitly teaches. Bacon was, as it were, the originator of modern philosophy.

Let us be a bit more correct historically and speak of Hobbes when we speak of Bacon. Hobbes was not too great a celebrator of Bacon, but in such matters contemporaries cannot be trusted.

Kant says by his critique of pure theoretical reason that metaphysical knowledge is impossible. I mean metaphysical in the traditional sense of the word. Hence the theoretical life cannot be the highest life. The truly human life is the moral life.

Not what was the Baconian-Hobbian assertion regarding the so-called contemplative ideal? What did they say about theoretical knowledge or science deviating from Aristotle?

Student: Science properly understood is in the service of mankind.

Strauss: They use a more precise word than "mankind."

Student: The sake of power for the relief of man's estate.

Strauss: Yes. "Power" is the decisive word. Here we see the difference from Kant. Kant would say - if we try to make it into a simple formula - "Science for the sake of what?"

Student: For the sake of morality.

Strauss: Yes. Because the end of man can never be theoretical perfection, but can only be morality. So as great as is the difference between power and morality, as great is the change which Kant effected in moral philosophy.

Let us consider this regarding a parallel point and that concerns happiness. What does Kant say about happiness? What does he say here in this section? We will hear more about it when we come to the Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals.

Student: From the empirical point of view it is the ultimate end of all desires and senses. It is the one word which combines everything that we seek for. That is, on an empirical basis.

Strauss: But is it the end of man?

Student: Not as man.

Strauss: As what?

Student: As a sensual animal.

Strauss: But does this work out? How do we go about it? I

mean, what is happening. Satisfaction of all our desires, or what?

Student: The question is whether happiness could be satisfaction from an empirical point of view. Will it be obtained from a moral point of view if a man is worthy of happiness.

Strauss: Yes. But we are speaking now of happiness. What Kant implies and even states is that happiness is a very questionable end. It is a natural end, but a questionable end.

Now let us look back to Aristotle to get some help in seeing what the peculiarity of Kant is. What does Aristotle say about the end of man? How does he call it?

Student: _____ which we translate as happiness.

Strauss: Yes. Let us translate it as happiness as everyone did. The etymology we can forget about. That may be necessary in other connections but not now. Happiness is the end of man. Everyone agrees with that. If one wants a different paraphrase of it, one can say, "An enviable state of being pleased - enviable satisfaction." I say enviable because you find sometimes moronic people who are smiling all the time, but no one really envies him unless he is very unhappy and would exchange places with anyone. So an enviable state of satisfaction.

But, still, there are various forms of that. For example, some people regard wealthy men as such happy. Is Aristotle satisfied with that? No. Because he has lived too long to agree with that. But what is happiness according to Aristotle?

Student: Achieving excellence.

Strauss: Yes. Let us say virtuous activity. "Activity" because if you are only dormant with your virtue that is not enough.. Virtuous activity, yes. But this needs something else. Does not virtuous activity have conditions?

Student: A modest competence.

Strauss: Yes. What Aristotle calls the equipment. So, let us say, V + E - that is happiness. But with the emphasis on virtuous activity, meaning that if you lose all your equipment and are in a terrible condition like Priam at the conquest of Troy. His happiness was undamaged because his nobility of character was undamaged. He suffered very much, but this gave him an occasion even to exercise moral virtue, his nobility.

So we can say that for Aristotle the core of happiness is moral virtue. For Kant morality is something radically different from Aristotle. For in Kant's thinking you may be perfectly moral, but that does not in any way guarantee you happiness. In a passage on page 838 in the second edition or thereabouts, Kant states the problem. Let us say that the good life consists in never acting unjustly. Still, does this suffice for us? Do we not also desire not to suffer injustice? This has nothing to do with our morality. It has to do with the morality of other people. But we need both. So just as Socrates distinguished

between acting injustly or not acting injustly and suffering injustice or not suffering injustice, Kant distinguishes between morality here and happiness there. So happiness does not include morality. Nevertheless there is a link between the two things. That is indicated by Kant's formula: worthiness of happiness. What is behind this formula? Let us look back at people like Hobbes, Bacon, Locke and so on. They may be said to have claimed against Aristotle, "You speak of happiness, the natural end of man. But that doesn't exist." I will read to you one passage of Hobbes which is polemical, but not against Aristotle in particular.

Leviathan, Chapter 6 towards the end: "Continued success in obtaining those things which a man from time to time desires, that is to say continual prospering. That is what men call felicity. I mean felicity of this life. For there is no such thing as perpetual tranquility of mind because life itself is but motion and can never be without desire nor without fear. No more than without sense." He doesn't speak of happiness in the other life because it doesn't know anything about that. For Hobbes there is no happiness in the sense of a state, of a level which there would be for Aristotle.

Happiness, we can say, in Hobbes is radically subjective. Different people have different notions of happiness, and the same man at different times. So happiness is something by which we cannot take our bearings at all because of its radical subjectivity. That is very bad. How shall we guide our lives then? How can there be a society of men if there are no common goals? The answer which these men give is this: While happiness is radically subjective - this is, of course, my bad, modern lingo, but I must make myself understood - there are conditions of happiness which apply to whatever you understand by happiness. These conditions are, in the first place, life; in the second place, you must be free to circulate - freedom. Your possibility of becoming happy - whatever you understand by happiness - will be restrained if you are locked up. Third, you must have the freedom to pursue happiness as you understand happiness. I am trying to quote the Declaration of Independence. So, in other words, while happiness is radically subjective, there are conditions of happiness which are universally valid regardless of what you understand by happiness.

When Kant speaks of worthiness of happiness he does something comparable to what these earlier thinkers did - to replace happiness by a condition of happiness. Only Kant now calls this condition the worthiness of happiness. But this is strictly parallel to what I said before, i.e. that he replaces science for the sake of power by science for the sake of morality.

There are quite a few things which we have to consider here. Where shall we begin. He says at the beginning of today's assignment, page 823. We won't read that now. Human reason is in need of discipline or which he has spoken in the preceding section. But this is very humiliating, that reason itself should need discipline. But, fortunately for reason, reason itself alone can exercise this discipline.

Then he turns to the subject, "The Canon for Pure Reason," meaning for the right use of pure reason. It can concern only its practical use as is stated in this first section.

Now let us turn to the first section of "The Last End of the Pure Use of our Reason." (The Critique of Pure Reason, Norman Kemp Smith tr. second edition).

Reader: "Reason is impelled by a tendency of its nature"

Strauss: "Of its nature." Let us not forget that reason has a nature. Now this nature is different from the nature of which Kant generally speaks, but it is important that Kant can still speak and must speak of the nature of reason.

Let us perhaps read on page 826.

Reader: "The final aim to which the speculation of reason . . . in accordance with a maxim which is inviolable, and which is so fundamental that without it we should not be able to employ reason in any empirical manner whatsoever"

Strauss: We already know that. Go to the end of the paragraph.

Reader: "These three propositions are for speculative reason always transcendent, and allow of no immanent employment - that is, employment in reference to objects of experience, and so in some manner really of service to us - but are in themselves, notwithstanding the very heavy labours which they impose upon our reason, entirely useless."

Strauss: These are, therefore, in no way necessary for knowledge and yet they are nevertheless urgently recommended to us by our reason. Then their importance can only concern the practical. And then he explains what the practical is which was stated properly by Mr. _____.

Then he makes the distinction between pragmatic laws and moral laws. Pragmatic laws are laws of prudence aiming at our happiness, happiness understood in an amoral sense. Whereas, moral laws are radically distinguishable.

Now, in the paragraph after the next . . .

Reader: "The whole equipment of reason, in the discipline which may be entitled pure philosophy . . . in the constitution of our reason, been directed to moral interests alone."

Strauss: You see here the way in which Kant speaks in the language of teleological theology. Kant does not make here clear as he does later on that there is a nature wisely providing for us. This cannot be theoretically true. It cannot be asserted as a theoretical truth. But, nevertheless, the whole argument here is: What is the purpose of nature in preventing us from having theoretical knowledge regarding God and immortality while enabling us to have a moral faith in a God and in immortality? Here belief in God and immortality are presenting as presuppositions of morality and they are

explicitly so-called later on. This is not exactly what Kant means as comes out in his later moral writings.

Regarding freedom there is an important passage on page 830. He repeats first what he had said before in the passage which we read last time on the distinction between the arbitrium brutum and the arbitrium liberum.

Reader: "Practical freedom can be proved through experience . . . These laws are therefore to be entitled practical laws."

Strauss: Now this distinction which Kant makes here between laws of nature and laws of freedom is used throughout in his later writings. This is a milestone. Kant no longer speaks of natural laws in the traditional sense. He limits the natural laws in the Newtonian sense. The moral laws are called laws of freedom. This break with nature of which we will see more, is indicated by the terms. But the point which you surely observed is that natural freedom can be demonstrated by experience. What experience means here is hard to say. Whether he means here the experience of natural science or ordinary experience. I believe that it is safer to say that he means by that ordinary experience.

Now there comes a rather strange passage on page 831.

Reader: "Whether reason is not, in the actions through which it prescribes laws . . . as long as we are considering what ought and what ought not be be done."

Strauss: So, in other words, how this freedom would look if we had trans-empirical knowledge, no one can say. And this can, of course, also give rise to an extreme skepticism. That it may again be nature. What does this mean? But Kant says, at any rate, that for our practical use it is of no interest because we cannot know anything of what he calls transcendental freedom. And the practical freedom. What does he say about that?

Reader: "While we thus through experience know practical freedom to be one of the causes in nature, namely, to be a causality of reason in the determination of the will, transcendental freedom demands the independence of this reason - in respect of its causality, in beginning a series of appearances - from all determining causes in the sensible world. Transcendental freedom is thus, as it would seem, contrary to the law of nature, and therefore to all possible experience; and so remains a problem."

Strauss: This is, I think, a rather loose restatement of what he said in discussing the antinomy between natural causality and causality of freedom.

Now let us turn, then, to the second section, "The Ideal of the Highest Good." We have heard Kant's formulation in the second paragraph. "All the interests of my reason." He says here "my reason" because the questions are, "What can I know?" "What ought I to do?" "What may I hope?" This is confirmed later by what he says on page 857. "One cannot say that it is morally

certain that there is a God, but only that I am morally certain." This is strictly concerning me. Existential, as people have called it later. There cannot be an objective certainty.

Now the key question here for Kant is, "What may I hope?" Because the first has been answered in the Critique of Pure Reason, and the second is not problematic from Kant's point of view because we have the moral law within us. But the third question, will you read that part please? Page 834.

Reader: "The third question - If I do what I ought to do . . . because something does happen."

Strauss: Now what does he mean by the former and the latter? What is the former and what is the latter?

Student: The first and second laws of morality.

Strauss: More precisely, first the practical and second, the theoretical. That is correct.

Now he goes over to the distinction between happiness and the worthiness of happiness. The distinction is clear. Someone may be worthy of happiness without being happy. Worthy of happiness can only be the moral man as Kant will explain later on.

Now let us turn to page 835.

Student: "I assume that there really are pure moral laws."

Strauss: That is important, "I assume." Kant has not established that and, in a way, he never establishes it at all in the Critique of Pure Reason. We have to turn to the Foundations of Metaphysical Morals. Begin again.

Reader: "I assume that there really are pure moral laws . . . in so far as he makes the effort to think such a law clearly."

Strauss: That is, of course, hard. If he thinks of such a law then he must think of it as absolutely commanding. But must he conceive of morality in terms of law? That would be the question. Go on.

Reader: "Pure reason, then, contains, not indeed in its speculative employment, but in its practical employment which is also moral, principles of the possibility of experience, namely, of such actions as, in accordance with moral precepts, might be met with in the history of mankind."

Strauss: Of man. "History" has here a very innocent meaning. Things that people, chroniclers or newspapers made records. That, in contradistinction to the philosophy of history. Go on.

Reader: "For since reason commands that such actions should take place, it must be possible for them to take place."

Strauss: Because reason cannot be unreasonable. Yes?

Reader: "Consequently, a special kind of systematic unity . . . Accordingly it is in their practical, meaning thereby their moral employment, that the principles of pure reason have objective reality."

Strauss: What does Kant mean when he says that reason has, indeed, in regard to freedom in general - but not in regard to the whole nature - causality? He follows the German sentence structure. Reason has causality in regard to freedom in general, but not in regard to the whole of nature.

Student: The existence of rational beings is not a priori necessary.

Strauss: Surely not. But that is not, I think, what he means here. Reason vouches for the possibility of acting morally. "Thou ought," hence "Thou canst." That follows. If I know that this is my duty I know that I can fulfill it. Otherwise it couldn't be my duty. But reason has no causality in regard to the whole of nature. And this is exactly the point. We cannot vouch for our happiness. We can make ourselves worthy of happiness. But our power stops there. We can refrain from acting unjustly, but we cannot prevent other people from doing injustice to us. Therefore, if we want to have a harmony between acting justly and not suffering injustice, this cannot be achieved by man, but only by a being which has causality in regard to the whole of nature. That is to say God. This is the connection. It is stated a little bit later on page 836, bottom.

Reader: "This is the answer to the first of the two questions of pure reason that concern its practical interest:-Do that through which thou becomest worthy to be happy. The second question is:-If I so behave as not to be unworthy of happiness, may I hope thereby to obtain happiness? In answering this question we have to consider whether the principles of pure reason, which prescribe the law a priori, likewise connect this hope necessarily with it."

Strauss: Is the question understood? Assuming that pure reason prescribes pure moral law, does it therefore follow that pure reason entitles us to hope for that reward for our moral actions (without which reward there would be a terrible disharmony within the word between virtue and the reward for virtue)? Kant says, "Yes. This is, indeed, the case."

Let us read on page 838, the second paragraph. Kant's answer, to repeat, is in the affirmative. We are entitled - even compelled - to hope for the existence of such a supreme intelligence which rewards virtue.

Reader: "The idea of such an intelligence in which the most perfect moral will, united with supreme blessedness, is the cause of all happiness in the world-so far as happiness stands in exact relation with morality, that is, with worthiness to be happy-I entitle the ideal of the supreme good."

Strauss: Namely, the idea of such an intelligence. Or, simply stated, the supreme good is God which is, of course, the traditional view. But in Kant it comes in as a necessary implication, not to say consequence, of morality. Yes?

Reader: "It is, therefore, only in the ideal of the supreme original good"

Strauss: The "original goods" namely because they are derivative goods like men. Yes.

Reader: "that pure reason can find the ground of this connection . . . Thus God and a future life are two postulates which, according to the principles of pure reason, are, inseparable from the obligation which that same reason imposes upon us."

Strauss: It couldn't express itself more strongly. In other words, if there is a moral law, then we are compelled to hope that God exists and that there is a future life. So Kant really does what Rousseau was aiming at in The Profession of Faith of which I spoke in the first meeting, namely to find metaphysical teaching which would be strictly related to morality and nothing else. What Rousseau or his character, the Vicar, tried to do, but failed to do, Kant succeeds in doing at least much better. Kant uses even stronger language in the next paragraph.

Reader: "Morality, by itself, constitutes a system. Happiness, however, does not do so, save in so far as it is distributed in exact proportion to morality."

Strauss: That happiness is not a system is a somewhat scholastic way of saying that it does not have an order and, therefore, it cannot be an ideal of reason. It can only be an ideal of the imagination as Kant puts it elsewhere. Therefore, happiness cannot be the standard. Only morality can be. Happiness can be the standard, but morality tries for a harmony between morality and happiness. Go on.

Reader: "But this is possible only in the intelligible world, under a wise Author and Ruler. Such a Ruler, together with life in such a world, which we must regard as a future world, reason finds itself constrained to assume; otherwise it would have to regard the moral laws as empty figments of the brain, since without this postulate the necessary consequence which it itself connects with these laws"

Strauss: Who says, "postulate?"

Student: Norman Kemp Smith.

Strauss: Yes, not Kant. Kant later on speaks of posulates of pure reason, but he doesn't call them that here in the Critique of Pure Reason since the necessary effect of the saying which the same reason connects with them would not follow without that presupposition. Now postulate and presupposition are not the same thing. It is a very strong statement. Morality becomes an empty thing. How does Brutus say in Julius Caesar about virtue? At any rate, it is a shadow of reason, but for God and the future life. Finish this paragraph.

Reader: "Hence also everyone regards the moral laws as commands; and this the moral laws could not be if they did not connect a priori suitable consequences with their rules, and thus carry with them promises and threats. But this again they could not do, if they did not reside in a necessary being, as the supreme good, which alone can make such a purposive unity possible."

Strauss: Now, Mr. _____, you had a question.

Student: At the beginning of 838 there is a suggestion that everyone acts according to the moral laws. In other words, if there were a society in which not only one individual acted that way, but everyone acted that way, then there would be no possibility of your being treated unjustly. Morality, in that sense - if there were a perfect society - would be self-rewarding. If that were a possibility it would seem that God and a future life are no longer . . .

Strauss: Yes. I am glad that you brought that up. What would this be, not only in theological language, but in Kant's language?

Student: The City of God.

Strauss: No. The realm of God on earth. That was the point which later on was the objection of some people in the 19th century - the Communists especially, but not only them. To some extent also Hegel. The successors of Kant attacked him on the grounds that he wanted to have a reward. The harmony which can reasonably be expected between acting justly and not suffering injustice can be brought about by an improved social-political life. And Kant is very much concerned with the earthly condition. Otherwise he would not have written the Perpetual Peace and other things. But all the more urgent becomes the question, "What kept Kant back from the seemingly obvious solution to the problem?" What was it?

Student: Censorship.

Strauss: No. That is the problem with almost all of the not quite orthodox writers of the 18th century. One can, of course, say when confronted with such difficulties, "At least consider that they might keep something up their sleeves," but not in the case of Kant. We will come to that. It is true. We will see that. Kant is very alive to the morally questionable character of saying things which one does not believe. Much more than Plato or Socrates. (laughter) Why do you laugh? I do not criticize it. I would only like to know why you are laughing.

Student: Because usually we don't consider saying something that you don't mean as, in some sense, immoral.

Strauss: Who says something which he does not mean? Look what Plato does with the noble lie. Socrates in The Republic. He is worse. Not only does he commit a noble lie, he asks and urges any founders of this perfect city to use the noble lie. What is so exhiliarating. That I would like to know. That Kant should be more moralistic than Plato or Socrates?

Student: I don't think that he is more moralistic (inaudible)

Strauss: But may I tell you, as a matter of fact, that Kant explicitly taught that lying is universally evil. He was even wondering whether such little lies as "Your humble servant" at the end of a letter might not be morally bad. I believe he admitted the latter. He was not too stupid. But in other points it goes very far. For example, revolutions against a beastly tyrant were strictly forbidden. Why? Because you cannot make a revolution without conspiring unless you are a complete loner and that won't work. But conspire means, of course, to lie. Someone asks you, "Why do you talk to this fellow all the time?" And then you say, "Because we play bridge." Why? So far does it go in the case of Kant. It is very remarkable that when we discuss such questions we must laugh. That is part of the problem. There is some wickedness in us that we enjoy some immoralities when talked about. For example, murder would not cause such an exhiliaration I do not think.

Student: There is a play called Playboy of the Western World which is a comedy about a man who has killed his father and the people think it is very funny when he talks about it, but when they see it they think it is terrible.

Strauss: But was this murderer of his father by any chance an intellectual?

Student: It didn't really happen, but he thought it did and they thought it did.

Strauss: Because they might have laughed at him as an intellectual as an intellectual regardless of what he did.

Student: Yes. Well, they laughed when they only heard about it.

Strauss: Yes. Well I am glad to hear about it.

Second Student: I think that the occasion of the laughter is the _____, Book I at the end. We agree with Kant and when you remind us what Socrates did our reaction is that of Cyrus when he said, "Oh, but you can do these things." Kant brings us up as nobly as a Persian . . .

Strauss: But only those who have read the Education of Cyrus can follow Mr. _____. Can you state that?

Second Student: Well, Cyrus had been brought up as a good Persian boy. "Thou shall not steal, loot, never tell lies. Play no tricks." And then papa took him out to go hunting across the frontier and pointed out to him, "You are a big boy now. Use your wits." The boy answered, "I don't know how." His father said, "But you know all about it." Didn't we teach you to hunt and to deceive animals?" And Cyrus laughed.

Strauss: In other words, this double morality. That in war we may cheat. And, of course, the laughing is the same phenomenon which we have here.

Student: The laughter also might be involved with the idea that someone who lies might be more moral than someone who does not.

Strauss: Yes, there are such cases. But Kant denies that.

Student: There does seem to be a historical incident when Kant was called before the King for his theological writings and was required not to publish anything further of a similar nature.

Strauss: Yes. That was easy. Then he didn't say anything and that is not lying.

Student: But that is not speaking the truth either. That is a distinction which Kant makes. If you don't say anyting then you do not lie. But you can say, "That is a very subtle thing . . ."

Is there any other point regarding this matter?

In order to understand Kant's argument a bit better, let us look on page 841, the first paragraph.

Reader: "Happiness, taken by itself, is, for our reason, far from being the complete good. . . and not conversely the prospect of happiness that makes possible the moral disposition.

Strauss: That is crucial. That is a clearer statement than we had before. As it appeared from earlier statements, morality has no force unless I can be assured of a reward. Then I act immorally. But I must wish for God and future life from morality. As it were, not thinking so much of my future reward, but of the future reward of other people.

Kant tries to show in the sequel on page 842 following that the moral theology, i.e. the theology which follows from the demands of morality as distinguished from a physical theology - a theology based on the observation of order in nature. Only a moral theology can lead to a God as one most perfect and intelligent original being. Theoretical reasoning would never lead in any case - even if it did lead to God it would never lead to one God nor to a reasonable God.

Here is one point which is quite remarkable on page 843. That there must be one highest God, one highest will.

Reader: "For how, under different wills, should we find complete unity of ends."

Strauss: But there is a question. If these gods were all of super-human rationality . . .

Student: They would have the perpetual peace treaty.

Strauss: Treaty would not be necessary. A complete friendship among them.

So deeply is Kant under the spell of the Biblical tradition. There is another sign of that towards the bottom of page 844 where Kant says very simply and strongly that the highest purposes are those of morality. That admits of no question. Kant

will state in clearer words and in a very powerful form this problem at the beginning of the Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals. Let us look on page 845 towards the end of the page. He speaks of the history of human reason.

Reader: "Accordingly we find, in the history of human reason, that until the moral concepts were sufficiently purified and determined, and until the systematic unity of their ends was understood in accordance with these concepts and from necessary principles, the knowledge of nature, and even a quite considerable development of reason in many other sciences, could give rise only to crude and incoherent concepts of the Deity, or as sometimes happened resulted in an astonishing indifference in regard to all such matters."

Strauss: So the cultivation of theoretical reason did not have any serious effect on man's notion of God. But the cultivation of morality did. Yes?

Reader: "A greater preoccuption with moral ideas, which was rendered necessary by the extraordinarily pure moral law of our religion, made reason more acutely aware of its object, through the interest which it was compelled to take in it."

Strauss: Excuse this seemingly improper question, but there are authors where one never knows what they mean by "we." What is it in Kant?

Student: Christianity.

Strauss: There cannot be the slightest doubt. But it is very rare. I do not have a concordance of Kant. I think that there is none in existence. But it would be interesting to see whether Kant, apart from his writing on religion, speaks of "our" religion. It is very rare.

In the last paragraph of this section he makes clear that there is not possible a deduction of the moral laws from the moral theology because the moral laws logically precede the moral theology. On page 847.

Reader: "So far, then, as practical reason has the right to serve as our guide, we shall not look upon actions as obligatory because they are the commands of God, but shall regard them as divine commands because we have an inward obligation to them."

Strauss: So, in other words, there are no divine commands. We cannot regard any commands as divine except the moral laws. Yes?

Reader: "We shall study freedom according to the purposive unity that is determined in accordance with the principles of reason, and shall believe ourselves to be acting in conformity with the divine will in so far only as we hold sacred the moral law which reason teaches us from the nature of the actions themselves; and we shall believe that we can serve that will only by furthering what is best in the world, alike in ourselves and in others."

Strauss: This is Kant's last word about religion. Religion consists in regarding the moral laws - and, of course, in obeying the moral laws - as divine commands. There are no duties towards God distinguished from the duties towards ourselves and others. The last sentence said, "the best in the world." We can also say, "the best of the world." We have to make the world as good as possible. God does not need us in any way. There is no place for prayer and other acts of worship. In other words, there are no duties towards God different from our duties towards men.

If you look at what has happened in theology and in religious practice in many parts of the Western world, you know that here you have one of the sources of that.

We come, then, to the last section. The striking thing about it is that Kant distinguishes here three kinds of faith: pragmatic faith, say the faith which a physician has that this is the right treatment for this particular disease. He cannot know, perhaps, but he is willing to risk his reputation. The second is doctrinal faith. For example, Kant has a doctrinal faith that there are human beings on some other planet. I.e., he does not know, but it seems highly probable to him and he would invest all the savings, if any, that he had in making possible an expedition. Then there is moral faith, faith based on morality. There is nothing said about religious faith here. That is quite interesting.

Student: What about 854. "We must admit the doctrine of the existence of God.belongs to doctrinal belief."

Strauss: That is true. But not in the same sense. The example which he gave before was about life on other planets. Alright read this section which you began to read.

Student: "Now we must admit that the doctrine of the existence of God belongs to doctrinal belief. For as regards theoretical knowledge of the world, I can cite nothing which necessarily presupposes this thought as the condition of my explanations of the appearances exhibited by the world, but rather am bound so to employ my reason as if everything were mere nature. Purposive unity is, however, so important a condition of the application of reason to nature that I cannot ignore it, especially as experience supplies me so richly with examples of it. But I know no other condition under which this unity can supply me with guidance in the investigation of nature, save only the postulate that a supreme intelligence has ordered all things in accordance with the wisest ends."

Strauss: And then read page 855 bottom.

Reader: "But the merely doctrinal belief is somewhat lacking in stability; we often lose hold of it, owing to the speculative difficulties which we encounter, although in the end we always inevitably return to it."

Strauss: The final discussion of this problem of the teleology of nature - Is it possible to give an account of living beings without assuming theology is found in the Critique of Judgement.

Reader: "It is quite otherwise with moral belief."

Strauss: I will qualify my statement. You called this religious belief.

Student: But natural theology.

Strauss: You may call it that, but Kant doesn't call it that. Surely Kant doesn't explicitly speak of religious belief here in this section. So we will leave it at that.

This statement at the end is quite impressive, bringing out the closeness of Kant to Rousseau of which I have spoken before.

Seminar on Kant: Session V

April 18, 1967

We will turn today to Kant's moral doctrine. We have discussed insufficiently, but sufficiently for our own purposes I hope, Kant's theoretical philosophy. Now I would like to summarize this philosophy so that we do not forget it as we turn to Kant's moral teachings. In order to understand Kant's theoretical doctrine as understood especially in the Critique of Pure Reason we must consider pre-Kantian rationalism. We must study this in order to understand the change effected by Kant. I take as an example Spinoza's "Critique of Miracles" in the Theological, Political Treatise. When we analyze Spinoza's argument we discern a twofold argument: first, miracles are impossible; second, miracles are unknowable. These are two different propositions. Roughly, regarding the second point Spinoza's argument is that the fact that we do not know a natural cause for a given event does not prove that there is not a natural cause which will be discovered in the future. This is also not sufficient for Spinoza's purpose as one could show and, therefore, it is supplemented by another argument namely that the Biblical miracles are not events of which we know directly. We know them only through reports. Are these reports trustworthy? Have the observations been made by trained observers or by simple people without such training?

Let us discuss first the first point - the impossibility of miracles. This is presented by Spinoza in the Treatise as derivative from a certain theological treatise namely that the intellect of God and the will of God are identical. This is, as Spinoza presents it, a wholly arbitrary premise. Ultimately, this would lead back to the argument presented in Spinoza's Ethics, especially in the definitions occurring at the beginning of the Ethics. There Spinoza gives the definitions of "substance," "accident" and so on which are modifications of the traditional definitions. No reasons are given why these definitions should be superior to the traditional ones. These definitions are, one can say, arbitrary. They are not, however, meant to be arbitrary. They derive their evidence from the purpose which they serve, namely, how to give a clear and distinct account of the whole. In present day language, how to give a scientific account of the whole. It is presupposed - as already in Descartes - that the clear and distinct account is identical with the true account. But this is a questionable assertion. It would mean that what is not clearly or distinctly known or knowable is not true. But why should this be? It would be a great convenience if it were, but this is not a good enough reason. Spinoza expresses the whole position in one simple proposition in the second book of the Ethics: "We possess adequate knowledge of the essence of God," but no non-theologian would ever have granted that. But if we possess adequate knowledge of the ground of everything then there is no question that we can get adequate knowledge - clear and distinct knowledge - of God. So the proof of the impossibility of miracles rests on very questionable foundations.

What about the proof of the unknowability of miracles? This has a certain plausability because it is simply guided by the spirit of empirical, causal explanation. If we can give a causal explanation of a given event that doesn't solve the issue because there may be such an explanation in the future with the progress of science. But this has one drawback. There might be miracles, although we would never know them. This seems to protect the sphere of man from any possible miracles because we cannot know them. In other words, this corresponds to Kant's distinction between the world of possible experience and the thing in itself of which we can have no knowledge.

There is one difficulty here. Could the world in itself not be accessible on the basis of faith and then, of course, miracles would not be knowable, but believable.

Let us turn now to Kant. Kant takes it for granted that miracles are unknowable. We cannot possibly experience a breach in the natural laws. But this reasoning which disposes of the miracles disposes at the same time with freedom. Spinoza knew that and he liked it. Kant, however, is very dissatisfied with this state of affairs.

Kant's problem can, therefore, be stated as follows: How can one assert freedom without letting in miracles again? That is the problem which Kant has to solve and which he solves primarily by his moral theology. A moral world subject to a law of its own - moral law - which also excludes miracles.

There are two different laws, the laws of nature and the laws of freedom. Between them they make miracles impossible. For example, miracles presumably have something to do with divine grace - undeserved happiness as it appears in Kantian terms. There must not be any undeserved happiness. In other words, the twofold legislation makes miracles impossible. Yes?

Student: Why does a miracle have to be undeserved happiness? Cannot a man have been so good as to deserve a miracle?

Strauss: Then he would get what he deserves. That would be a nonmiraculous assignment of the happiness which he deserves. There are no exceptions to any rules. Either there are moral laws or the laws of the distribution of happiness and there are natural laws. This, then, is the peculiar position of Kant compared, say, with Kant.

Does anyone have a question regarding what I have just mentioned?

Student: Does this mean, then, that not only does Kant say that miracles are unknowable, but that they are impossible?

Strauss: Yes. In the first place, he can only say that they are unknowable. The thing in itself is unknowable, hence miracles are possible. But at this point his moral theology enters. We have some access to the thing in itself through our moral consciousness which compels us to postulate the existence of God as a moral God, let us say. Thus morality would exclude the miracles. We cannot know this, but it is the only assertion which we can make with any foundation, the foundation in this

case being our moral conscience. If there are no more questions regarding this point we will turn to Mr. ____'s paper.

Mr. _____, that was a clear paper, but some points I think you misunderstood. You said at the beginning, "The distinction of philosophy into logic, physics and ethics was originated by Kant." That is not true. Kant himself says that it is an ancient distinction. It goes back to a pupil of Plato, So it is very old.

What Kant tries to do is to give it a new rationale. That is the first point.

Now when we speaks in the sequel of the metaphysics of morals and the metaphysics of nature, what does metaphysics here mean?

Student: It means the things that we know a priori - that is, without regard to experience - about these two branches of knowledge.

Strauss: So metaphysics here no longer has the meaning which it had in the past, the metaphysics which Kant claims to have destroyed.

Student: But what he makes as the first science is something different from metaphysics.

Strauss: The distinction which Kant himself makes is transcendent metaphysics of the past (which is impossible according to him) and immanent metaphysics, the metaphysics within the sphere of reason. This is then divided into the two parts, the metaphysics of nature and the metaphysics of morals. The foundation of both of them is found in the critique of reason, of both theoretical and practical reason.

When you tried to give an account of Kant's analysis of morality you saw that this is very different from, say, the Aristotelian account. But I am not sure that you did not misrepresent Kant in this connection. When you spoke about what Kant said about temperament- can you repeat what you said about that?

Student: Temperaments are gifts of nature which may be bad. I also said that as they are gifts of nature they are not something for which a man appears to be wholly responsible.

Strauss: He is not in any way responsible for it.

Student: I said that this would would appear to be another reason for attributing moral character to the founding of the will alone in that it is only in regard to this faculty that man can be held responsible regardless of the work of nature. Therefore, only this will could be universally binding on all men regardless of what kind of temperaments they were provided with by nature.

Strauss: So what, then, would be the difference between him and Aristotle? This is what you have in mind now. That to Aristotle the gifts of nature to some and the withholding from

others somehow forms part of our judgement of the man.

Student: And also Aristotle seems to lay greater possibility of the education and the formation of what was given by nature in order that the affections can be directed in a certain way by education.

Strauss: Yes, I can see that - especially in the section which you have read - Kant gives the impression of doing that, but this is not quite sufficient. But it is now a bit clearer to me what you meant than before.

As to this key point which Kant makes and which he will make more fully in the sequel - the universality of the maxims - what does he mean? Take the example of lying. I find it more convenient in a given situation to lie. How do I find out that this is the wrong judgement?

Student: He says that the grounds of prudence must be clearly distinguished from those of morality. What I must ask is, "What if other people - also finding it convenience in these circumstances - also broke the laws of morality against lying? Would it be alright?"

Strauss: In the first place, when Kant speaks of prudence he does not mean what Aristotle means when he speaks of prudence, i.e. practical reason. He means only calculation. It is wholly amoral, whereas with Aristotle prudence is essentially moral.

I mentioned earlier in this course the doctrine of Rousseau regarding the general will. I have my particular will - I took the example that I don't like to pay taxes. How does this desire look when I try to give it the form of a law? Then it would mean that no one should pay any taxes. Then I see that my desire is irrational. I generalize my will.

Kant is more radical. He doesn't speak of generalization, but of universalization. Because it is not only the community of which I am a member and in whose assembly I vote, but it applies to all rational beings. And it is not particularly the wills, but the maxims.

What is a maxim?

Student: A maxim as distinguished from a formal principle is a law about some specific kind of practice like lying.

Strauss: A maxim is not a law in itself. A maxim is a general rule which I choose and on which I act. For example, I would like to make it my rule to live as conveniently as possible. That is my maxim. Maxim comes from the Latin _____, namely the first premise of a syllogism. So we act - whether we make it clear to ourselves or not - always on maxims. These maxims on which we act may change, but in the case of every maxim on which I act, I must test it by universalizing it in the following manner. Not only must I say that everyone else will act on this maxim, but everyone else is to act under that presupposition under the law. Then I must see whether this can still make sense. How would it work in the case of lying?

In a given case I find lying convenient. What should I consider in this case?

Student: You have to consider - convenience aside - whether it could be a rational law.

Strauss: How would this testing proceed?

Student: One imagines what would happen if everyone lied.

Strauss: Not only everyone lying, but everyone morally obliged to lie. Is such a world possible?

Student: Is it possible to say what I said in my paper - that a maxim is the grounds on which a person justifies his actions?

Strauss: Yes, you can say that. But the point is that the maxim as such is not a law. A maxim is that upon which I act or habitually act. And the maxim is to be tested by its ability to become a universal law. Therefore, according to Kant we do not need any other consideration or any experience, but only this test to know whether an action is moral or not. Yes?

Student: Going back to this lying and everyone being under the moral obligation to lie. Is it reasonable or possible to have a law which everyone is under the obligation to follow?

Strauss: Alright, then, it is permitted to lie whenever he sees fit.

Student: But how do we test this if not by experience? If I say that in my judgement such a situation would be undesireable, hence . . .

Strauss: But Kant says more. It would be impossible. We would contradict ourselves.

Let us see how Kant proceeds because what we find in the first section is only prefatory to the main discussion in the second section.

Let us, then, turn to the Preface of the Foundation of the Metaphysics of Morals. Kant starts with the traditional distinction between logic, physics, and ethics - the post-Platonic distinction. Yet Kant reinterprets it. Let us read the first paragraph.

Reader: "Ancient Greek philosophy was divided into three sciences - physics, ethics and logic. This division conforms perfectly to the nature of the division of the subject and one can improve on it perhaps only by supplying its principle in order both to insure its exhaustiveness and to define correctly necessary subdivisions."

Strauss: This is what Kant and modern thinkers generally try to do, to be "systematic." They try to deduce, for example, this distinction from a higher principle, just as if you look at Aristotle's Ethics you find there a number of virtues. Aristotle does not indicate the principle underlying this division.

Modern man - and not only modern man - want to have a principle which makes it clear that there are these and these and no other virtues. Skip the next two paragraphs and read on.

Reader: "All philosophy so far as it is based on experience may be called empirical. But so far as it presents its doctrine solely on the basis of a priori principles it may be called pure philosophy."

Strauss: You see Kant uses here "science" and "philosophy" synonymously. Yes.

Reader: "The latter, pure philosophy, when merely formal is logic. When limited to definite objects of understanding it is metaphysics. In this way there arises the idea of a twofold metaphysics, a metaphysics of nature and a metaphysics of morals. Physics, therefore, will have an empirical and also a rational part . . ."

Strauss: "A rational part" being the metaphysics of nature.

Reader: " . . . and ethics likewise. In ethics, however, the empirical part may be called more specifically practical anthropology, the rational part morals proper."

Strauss: So practical anthropology - at least an important part of it - would be the art of influencing men. This is not morality, but practical anthropology in Kant's sense.

So here Kant tells us of the metaphysics of morals with which he will deal later, compared with the other parts of philosophy, especially pure philosophy.

Let us skip the next paragraph and read the following one.

Reader: "Since my purpose here is directed to moral philosophy I narrow the proposed questions . . . "

Strauss: I.e., we can also say, "to the metaphysics of morals."

Reader: "Is it not of the utmost necessity to construct a pure moral philosophy which is completely free from everything which may be only empirical and thus belong to anthropology.

Strauss: Anthropology in the wide sense where it would include what we would call psychology, sociology and so on. Yes?

Reader: "That there must be such a philosophy is self-evident from the common idea of duty and moral laws."

Strauss: Here, here. Very few people today would regard this as self-evident. Why is it so evident? That we will see in the sequel.

Reader: "Everyone will admit that the law, if it is to hold morally . . . and that every other precept which rests in principles of mere experience - even a precept which is in certain respects universal - so far as it leans in the least on empirical grounds may be called a practical rule, but never a moral law.'

Strauss: Why is it, then, so evident that there must be a pure moral philosophy without any empirical basis? The experience upon which ethics could be based is, of course, experience of man, of the nature of man. If you add other animals - perhaps primals - that wouldn't change the situation a bit.

Why is this insufficient? Why must the fundamental part of morals be divorced from any consideration of the nature of man, from any empirical considerations?

Student: inaudible

Strauss: He uses nature only as . . ?

Student: As what men do empirically.

Strauss: Not only that. Kant goes beyond that.

Student: Following Hume he recommends that from induction you can never get even the slightest necessity. Necessity has to be something which is the condition of intellection.

Strauss: That is true, but there is a more specific reason which he indicates here. Yes?

Student: That were we to imagine other rational beings (not necessarily constructed with human nature) they must also necessarily follow the laws. That must be the premise.

Strauss: And this is not merely a play of the imagination, the necessity to think of such possible beings. What is the most important case involved?

Student: God.

Strauss: Yes. In other words, if morality were essentially related to human nature then there would be no reason why our notions of justice, for example, could in any way be applied to God.

Student: What makes it so evident that they should be?(inaudible)

Strauss: But from Kant's point of view that is not valid. The enlightened part of his readers would have granted this. But the point is this. While Kant destroys (or claims to destroy) speculative or theoretical theology, the possibility of God's existence is for Kant essential. Therefore, we have to consider the possibility of an amoral or transmoral God and morality must be defined so as to include the application to God. Therefore, as Mr. _____ mentioned, the veracity of God - as demanded by Descartes in a famous passage - is necessary.

God must be moral in the sense in which we ought to be moral. That is to say that what we mean by God is a holy being. Holy means a being which is completely just and perfectly moral. Of man we cannot say that. We have no reason to assume that any man is wholly just. But we know that we ought to be perfectly just. So the Biblical notion that God's ways are not our ways and hence our moral laws are in no way applicable to God - that is precluded.

Let us now read the sequel.

Reader: "Thus not only are moral laws together with their principles . . . though he is capable of the idea of a practical, pure reason, he is not so easily able to make is concretely effective in the conduct of his life."

Strauss: This is meant to be in passing. We still need the power of judgement in order to apply the moral laws properly. Now what does this mean? For example, I know that I ought not to lie under any circumstances. I ought never to say anything which is not true. Of course, I must know the truth. If I say what is objectively a falsehood, believing it to be true, then I do not lie. This does not cause any difficulty as far as Kant is concerned. But there are other difficulties. I will give you an example. If I sign "Yours sincerely," but I am not yours sincerely, then I must make some judgement to decide if it is worthwhile to say "Yours insincerely." So we still need judgement The main point, though, is wholly independent of any experience.

Go on now to the next paragraph.

Reader: "A metaphysics of morals is, therefore, indispensable, not merely because of motives to speculate on the sources of a priori practical principles which lie in our reason . . ."

Strauss: In other words, not only because we as theoretical men wish to have a complete survey of all a priori knowledge which we possess (which is a legitimate concern for Kant but not the sole reason).

Reader: "But also because morals themselves remain subject to all kinds of corruption so long as the guide and supreme norm for their correct estimation is lacking. For it is not sufficient to that which should be morally good that it conform to the law. It must be done for the sake of the law."

Strauss: This is a distinction which if developed means the distinction between legality and morality, and which is crucial for Kant. An action which is legal according to the moral law is not for this reason moral because it may not have been chosen for the sake of the moral law. For example, I may refrain from lying because I find it much too troublesome - I must lie again and again in order to support my first lie. Hence I act legally, but I do not act morally because I do not act for the sake of the law. Go on.

Reader: "Otherwise the conformity is merely contingent and spurious because, although the unmoral ground may indeed now and then produce lawful actions, more often it brings forth unlawful ones."

Strauss: In other words, this desire for convenience which induces me not to lie will also induce me to refrain from inconvenient duties. Is this not so? Therefore it is not a good maxim: I will follow my convenience above everything else.

Reader: "But the moral law can be found in its purity and genuineness - which is the central concern in the practical -

nowhere else than in a pure philosophy . . . it spoils the purity of morals themselves and works contrary to its own end."

Strauss: Kant speaks in the following paragraph of the "pure will" just as he speaks of "pure thinking." Pure will is the will determined by the a priori moral law and pure thinking is a priori thinking.

Let us then turn to the beginning of the paragraph after that.

Reader: "As a preliminary to a metaphysics of morals which I intend some day to publish I issue these foundations. There is, to be sure, no other foundation for such a metaphysics than the critical examination of the pure practical reason just as there is no other foundation for metaphysics than the already published examination of the pure speculative reason."

Strauss: The latter, of course, is the Critique of Pure Reason. This book, The Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, is a provisional statement the full statement of which would be a critique of pure practical reason as he calls it. But a critique of pure practical reason, Kant says here, is not so terribly important. So Kant does not promise that he will write a critique of pure practical reason. He did try to publish it a few years later, but in this respect he changed his mind. So the plan would be a critique of pure reason, i.e. pure speculative reason followed by a work on the metaphysics of nature which Kant published. Then The Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals followed later by a metaphysic of morals which he also wrote and published. Kant changed his mind as to the necessity of a much more extensive foundational consideration and wrote, therefore, after this work The Critique of Pure Practical Reason. Yes?

Student: You described this as provisional. I think that at the end of the Critique he suggests that on the basis of what has been laid down there, he can be confident that the principles he derives from the Critique in both morals and physics are things which he can be confident of. Must we say that they are provisional in the sense that he would not have the confidence about them that he would have about the Critique of Pure Reason?

Strauss: No. I must have expressed myself wrongly. What Kant is this. (illustration on blackboard) The Foundation of the Metaphysics of Morals to the metaphysics of morals is equal to The Critique of Pure Reason to the metaphysics of nature. Later on he changed his mind and replaced it, as it were, by The Critique of Practical Reason. Is this clear?

Student: Yes. But he seems to imply in The Critique of Pure Reason that even without a separate critique of practical reason he has shown enough having derived the principles stated here not merely provisionally, but with confidence. In other words, it seems to me that there is a certain overlap between The Critique of Pure Reason and . . .

Strauss: Yes. But if we look at the finished works we can say that the procedure in this book is analytical, ascending from

ordinary moral understanding to metaphysics. And the essence of The Critique of Practical Reason is synthetic, as Kant calls it, meaning it (inaudible)

There are quite a few things which have been changed and improved in the later work. We, of course, limit ourselves entirely to this first stage.

Then let us turn to the first section.

Reader: "Nothing in the world, indeed, nothing even beyond the world can possibly be conceived which could be called good without qualification except a good will."

Strauss: "Good will" is more than underlined. How would we translate this into Aristotle or, for that matter, Plato?

Student: The mode of the virtuous man.

Strauss: What corresponds to will in Aristotle.

Student: Deliberation.

Second Student: The themos.

Strauss: What has the themos to do with the will? Themos is the irascible part of the soul. Why should the will be irascible and not also (inaudible)?

Student: Didn't Aristotle say at the beginning of the Ethics if the irascible part can be conjoined to the rational part of the soul it can master the appetites in the same way that Kant says that practical reason united with the will . . .

Strauss: (inaudible)

It is very hard to say what would correspond to will in Aristotle and Plato. But I will read you two passages which will show you the importance of this notion in pre-Kantian thought. The first is from Augustine's City of God, Book 14, Chapter 7:

"The man's whose firm resolve is to love God and to love his neighbor not according to man, but according to God as he loves also himself, this man is - without any question - because of this love said to be a man of good will."

The man of good will is the man who loves God with his whole heart and loves his neighbor like himself. Here Augustine makes it quite clear what he means by "a man of good will." In Kant this content is completely absent.

Now I will read you a passage from Thomas Aquinas, Suma _____, Book 3, Chapter 116:

"Man is said to be good with a view to the fact that he has a good will by which he actualizes whatever good is in him. A will, however, is good because of the fact that it wills the good and especially the greatest good which is the end. The

more this man wills this good, the more this man is good. That man wills to a higher degree, therefore, what he wills out of love than what he wills out of fear." For what he wills only out of fear is said to be mixed with the involuntary. That is a reference to Aristotle. So, for example, someone who throws his merchandise into the sea out of fear (I mean in order to save his life). "Hence the love of the highest good," that is to say, of God, "makes man good to the highest degree."

So that is fundamentally what Thomas Aquinas means. And here we see a great difference from Kant because Kant's good will does not have this reference to a love of God or of one's neighbor.

Now let us turn to Aristotle to see the difference between him and Kant. I will read you only one passage at the beginning of the Nichomachean Ethics:

"The man who (inaudible) . . . Justice is the most noble or the fairest. Best is health. But to win whatever one desires is the pleasantest."

In other words, the noble, the good, and the pleasant are three entirely different considerations. What is most pleasant is something radically different from what is best and also from what is fairest.

"But we do not allow that he" (that man who makes this point) "is right. For happiness is at once the fairest and the best and the most pleasant."

Therefore, the man of good will (if we apply this concept) - the man who chooses best - would be that man who chooses that which is at the same time the most resplendent, the best and the most pleasant. That is happiness.

What does Kant do with the Aristotelian assertion. If we try to make Kant's assertion in the terms of Aristotle one would say that only the noble has to be considered. The noble as noble does not in any way imply the good and the pleasant. And while the good and the pleasant are, of course, attractive to us by nature, they are of no interest as far as our true worth is concerned. Our true worth consists only in our morality, i.e. of choosing the noble as noble. But we have already re-translated, as it were, Kant into the language of Aristotle and whether something important of Kant has not been lost in that translation we must see.

Now Kant gives a survey of those things which are not unqualifiedly good. What are they? Read the beginning.

Reader: "The intelligence, wit, judgement and the other talents of the mind - however they may be named - or courage, resoluteness and perseverence - the qualities of temperament - are doubtless in many respects good and desireable, but they can become extremely bad and harmful if the will which is to make use of these gifts of nature and which in its special constitution is called character, is not good."

Strauss: Does this make sense?

And now he shows us other things. For example, the gifts of fortune are not unqualifiedly good. For example, power, wealth, honor and even health because they are all things which can be misused. The only thing which cannot be misused is a good will. Does it make sense? Everything else can be misused. For example, science can be misused, philosophy can be misused, but there must be something which cannot possibly be misused. That is, again, not the language of Kant, but the language of Socrates or Plato. But we must ultimately arrive at something which cannot be misused.

Remember the Gorgias at the beginning. Gorgias is a teacher of rhetoric and there are people who say that it is not wise to take lessons in rhetoric because you or your son will become some form of a crook. Then Gorgias says with the proper indignation which every man would have in such a situation, "That may happen, but there is no necessity for that happening just as no boxing teacher is responsible if one of his pupils uses his boxing for boxing his own father. I only teach him to box. I even warn him to box only legally, but what can I do?" Therefore, Plato is suggesting that the art of boxing or of rhetoric is in need of a higher art which controls these lower arts and gives them guidance.

Kant has no place for such arts. Their place is taken by the good will.

I hope you will keep in mind the sentence which was just read to you. Now read the next paragraph.

Reader: "Some qualities seem to be conducive to this good will . . . But however unconditionally they were esteemed by the ancients they are far from being good without qualification."

Strauss: Again, here, here. Here we hear Kant's explicit criticism of the ancients. The ancients unqualifiedly praised these character traits and Kant says that they do not deserve unqualified praise because they are in need of the good will which means, in other words, that the ancients were not sufficiently attentive to the good will. Yes?

Reader: "For without the principle of the good will they can become extremely bad."

Strauss: "Evil" is a better translation.

Reader: "And the coolness of the villain makes him not only far more dangerous, but also more directly abominable in our eyes than he would have seemed without it."

Strauss: What does this mean? Especially this critique of the ancients. What would Aristotle or Plato say if they were called into question on this grounds on which Kant does call them into question?

Student: That a moderate villain is a contradiction in terms. The moderate man does not choose villainous objects.

Strauss: In other words, Kant uses "moderation" in a very new sense meaning a fellow who has the greatest self-control regarding, say, food, drink and so on in order to execute a robbery at 3 o'clock on a very cold day where there is no food and drink and so on. He must not drink because he would not, then, have the necessary sobriety.

Student: But courage seems to be less condoned to that kind of necessity . . .

Strauss: Courage was mentioned before.

Student: What I mean is, is not a courageous criminal possible in Aristotle's terms?

Strauss: No. Why not - dogmatically? Because the virtues are inseparable. What that means is another matter.

Student: In the sense in which they are inseparable that is the highest form of courage.

Strauss: Only then is it courage. Otherwise it would be a kind of sham courage, very well concealed, perhaps, but sham nevertheless.

So Kant arrives at his assertion - only the good will - by not understanding the virtues in the classical sense. He may have very good reasons for that, but they are not yet apparent.

When Kant speaks of the virtues and says that they are not choiceworthy for their own sake, but all subject to the good will, does he mention all the virtues or at least all the important virtues? Is there any virtue which he fails to mention?

Student: Wisdom.

Strauss: Well, he has mentioned it in a way - reason and so on.

Student: Justice.

Strauss: Justice. That is very interesting. Of justice Kant does not say that it may be misused because what he means by justice is that which would regulate all arts and human pursuits. So we can tentatively say that the good will replaces justice in particular or is most closely akin to justice.

What is justice? I don't mean anything recondite. What is justice according to the most obvious view stated by Aristotle in the fifth book when he speaks of justice in the most general meaning of the term.

Student: It means rightness as a whole.

Strauss: We must be more specific.

Student: Giving everyone his due?

Strauss: No. That is special justice. Justice in general. Obedience to the law. Of course the law must be a decent law.

This, of course, leads to a long story. But, still, this primary meaning that a just man is a law-abiding man can never be completely forgotten.

What does Kant do when he speaks of the good will? He will make clear very soon that the good will consists in obedience to the law. Of course, that does not mean the law of the land, but the moral law. The good will takes the way of justice.

I remind you here of an early statement of Kant long before he wrote this book when he said that Rousseau brought him into right shape. The conceited or imagined superiority of the theoretical man disappears. Then he speaks of what takes its place, the philosophic pursuits take the place of pure theory. He speaks there of the right of mankind, the right of humanity which, of course, would belong to the virtue of justice. So it is not an accident that Kant fails to mention justice.

I would like to read you a passage from Rousseau's letter to D'Alembert on the theater. He is saying that a man like Cicero would be a worthy subject of the theater because of his decency, nobility, morality. On the other hand, the dramatic poet should not boost such a fellow like Catalina, a scoundrel of the first magnitude. Granted that such a criminal has a strong soul, he will nevertheless be a detestable criminal and should one give to the deeds of a robber the colors of the deeds of a hero, what, then, would be the end of the morality of such a play if not to encourage the Catalinas and to give to clever scoundrels the public esteem that belongs rightfully only to good men. But such is the taste that one must flatter. Such are the manners of an intellectual century. Knowledge and courage alone have our admiration. And sweet and modest virtue remains without honors. He made a similar distinction. Knowledge, wit courage (and we can also add the other qualities mentioned by Kant) opposed to virtue.

Kant radicalizes that by not speaking of virtue but of the core of virtue which is the good will.

Now let us turn to the next paragraph.

Reader: "The good will is not good because of what it effects or accomplishes or because of its adequacy to achieve some proposed end . . ."

Strauss: Any proposed end.

Reader: "any propose end. It is good only because of its willing, i.e. it is good of itself. Regarded for itself it is to be esteemed incomparably higher than anything which could be brought about by it in favor of any inclination or even of the sum total of all inclinations."

Strauss: Alright and now the next paragraph.

Student: But there is something so strange in this idea of the absolute worth of the will alone . . . We shall, therefore, examine the idea from this point of view."

Strauss: So Kant grants that this assertion which he has made may sound fantastical to quite a few readers and he will dispose of this doubt. In other words he will prove that his assertion that the good will is the only unqualifiedly good thing is true. What is the character of the proof, Mr. ____? You spoke of it, but I wish you to repeat it.

Student: The proof is based on the assumption that nature has given every body organs which are best fitted for their respective purposes. If we see that we have a practical reason, i.e. a reason which can influence the will, and yet it doesn't produce happiness as mere instinct would, it must be that reason was designed to influence the will for some other purpose.

Strauss: So Kant argues here on the basis of the teleology of nature. But what is the status of the teleology of nature according to Kant. The teleology of nature is, of course, a theoretical pursuit.

Student: It is not something which we can know.

Strauss: So Kant argues here popularly. Most of his readers would have granted that there is a wisdom of nature, and we must understand nature as operating for some good end. That is in no way a demonstration of Kant's formal proof. It only prepares it. It is a preparatory argument and it is based, as you stated, on Rousseau to some extent.

Student: Is this any more popular than the very fact that this system requires a God and . . .

Strauss: A proper foundation has been laid for that. That is a different story. And it is very important that the absoluteness of the good will - if we can use that term - is to be established independently of any belief in the existence of God.

Kant proceeds, then, in this way in the following pages. He says that there is only one end for which man could have been destined by nature apart from morality and that is happiness.

Look at men in general including everyone himself. Do we need reason for making ourselves happy. Is reason sufficient for making us happy? If happiness were the end of nature she would have given us instinct as she has given it to the brutes. She would not have given us reason which forces us to choose and make all kinds of mistakes - unavoidable mistakes given the complexity of human situations. So happiness cannot be the end of man.

There is only one alternative - that reason has been given to men for the use of reason regardless of happiness. The highest use of reason is moral reason. Therefore this is the end intended by nature.

Let us skip two paragraphs and read the following one.

Reader: "Since reason is not, however, competent to guide the will safely with regard to its objects . . . For to the former

reason is absolutely essential. This will, indeed must not be the sole and complete . . ."

Strauss: In other words, here could be no question of substituting instinct as preferable to reason. Instinct would never be capable of producing morality. Go on.

Reader: " . . . but the highest good and the condition of all others, even the desire for happiness. . . We have, then, to develop the concept of the will which . . ."

Strauss: Let us stop here. So practical reason does lead to a contentedness of its own kind, to a happiness of its own kind which must not be mistaken for happiness in the ordinary sense. Here Kant for once comes very close to the older view.

But, as I said, this is only a provisional argument in order to familiarize the reader who at that time believed in the wisdom of nature. Precisely on this generally accepted basis the view that man has been created for his happiness, is incompatible with the belief in teleology.

Today in a very much changed situation most people would grant that. They draw the conclusion that if men want to be happy on earth they have to take care of it themselves. Nature won't do it. On the contrary, in a way by rebelling against nature and liberating ourselves from the power of nature is the way to happiness.

Here at this point the decisive argument begins and at this argument we must stop today. So next time we will finish our reading of the first part of the Foundations of Morals and Miss _____ will read her paper not at the beginning, perhaps in the middle or maybe at the end.

Seminar on Kant: Session 6

April 20, 1967

Before we turn to the text of Kant and to Miss ____'s paper, I would like to indicate in an easily intelligible way what Kant's moral and political philosophy is about. I will give as example phenomena with which you all are familiar. The key point which Kant makes and which no one prior to Kant has made in the same way is that moral philosophy (ethics) must not be based on experience. The same applies to the principles of political philosophy. It must not be based on any consideration of the human nature. This sounds very strange and yet it affects all our lives today, especially in the Western countries. What does this mean? In the first place, experience is of no benefit ultimately. It means that the past cannot tell us anything about what can be done or should be done in the future or what is possible in the future.

If there are a priori principles of morals and politics, the possibility of acting in accordance with those morals and politics is guaranteed by the a priori law of itself. Thou canst for thou ought. There is no need for an additional proof of the possibility.

Compare this with Plato or Aristotle. They describe a best social order and they are compelled according to their principles to prove the possibility of this best order by referring to the nature of man. For Kant that is not necessary. We will come to examples later on in his writing.

But if you ask people who are not Kantians and consider possibilities of people living together which have no basis in past experience, they would say that ultimately our basis is experience. For example, let us say that psychology teaches us something about the conditions in which aggressiveness emerges in individuals or groups. And on the basis of this empirical knowledge we can plan a society without any aggressiveness. So our project is based on experience and not on any a priori considerations. But there is one difficulty. Let us, say, take a society which is free from aggressiveness. This society, of course, has never been actual. That is admitted. Therefore, we cannot possibly see what bad side effects this otherwise very desireable goal might have. The only way to guarantee the feasibility and moral necessity is the way in which Kant is trying to do that. That the Kantian way is a good way is, of course, an altogether different question. But it has, at least, this great advantage compared with its so-called moral competitors. I trust that this will arouse some interest in quarters which otherwise would not be interested in Kant.

Now we have begun to study the Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals and what Kant said there, especially in the first section right at the beginning, about the good will which is - one might say - the core of morality. More precisely, it is that in human actions which alone can make these actions morally good. We are not morally good if we do the right things for the wrong reasons. For example, out of the calculation of our advantages or in order to improve our image. We must do the right thing because it is

right and for no other reason. We must choose the decent or noble because it is decent or noble and for no other reason.

Kant is concerned with isolating this core of morality because he is concerned with the purity of morality and with distinguishing morality itself from the morally indifferent ingredients of our actions. Let us look at a passage of Kant's in the first section, the third paragraph.

Reader: "The good will is not good because of what it affects or accomplishes or because of its adequacy to achieve any proposed end. It is good only because of its willing, i.e. it is good of itself and regarded for itself it is to be esteemed incomparably higher than anything which could be brought about by it in favor of any inclination, even of the sum total of all inclinations. Even if it should happen that, by a particularly unfortunate fate or by the niggardly provision of a stepmother of nature, this will should be wholly lacking in power to accomplish its purpose . . ."

Strauss: Listen carefully. This is a key point here.

Reader: " . . . and if even the greatest effort should not avail it to achieve anything of its end and if there remained only the good will - not as a mere wish but as (inaudible) - it would sparkle like a jewel in its own right, as something which had its full worth in itself. Youthfulness or fruitlessness can neither diminish nor augment in this worth. Its youthfulness will be only its setting, as it were, so as to enable us to handle it more conveniently in commerce or to attract the attention of those who are not yet connoisseurs, but not to recommend it to those who are experts or to determine its worth."

Strauss: Now let us compare this with a passage towards the end of the Nichomachean Ethics 1170A 23 following. Aristotle speaks here of the two lives: the practical or political and the theoretical lives. And he says here that the theoretical life is the higher. One reason that it is higher is that it needs much less of external equipment than the practical life. As far as the necessary things are concerned - say, the minimum of food - both the theoretical man and the practical man need it equally, although the political man does more toil with his body. But this would not make a great difference. But it makes a very great difference as far as the actions are concerned. The liberal man needs money in order to do the liberal actions and the just man needs money in order to return what he owes. For the intention - the will we could say - is not manifest. Also the unjust people pretend that they will to act justly. The key point is that the wills are not manifest. What is manifest are the deeds and in order to do these deeds you must have all kinds of means: you must have a healthy body and also money, of course. The courageous man, for example, needs power and the moderate man needs opportunities and temptations for how else could you know that he is moral.

Aristotle concludes, therefore, that because the moral man in the very fullest sense - that would be the man who acts politically on a large scale - is inferior because of his dependence on these external things to the theoretical man. It is usual - and not misleading - to call Aristotle's morality a gentleman's morality.

Kant implicitly rejects this gentleman's morality. What Kant does, in a way, is to grant this to Aristotle saying, "Here. If morality depends so much on external goods, it is a very questionable thing." But he does not face here, at least, the Aristotelian assertion that the mere wills remain immanisfest. He faces it in another way. He says that wills will always be immanifest because even the most moral man will never be sure that he acted out of morality.

Kant, in contradistinction to Aristotle, is concerned with the morality which every human being is capable of. Rich or poor. Handsome or ugly. Healthy or sick. The defect of the gentleman's morality that Aristotle to transcend the gentleman's morality in the selection of the contemplative life . . . But the contemplative life is the preserve of a small minority of people who have special natural gifts. Kant seeks the worth of man in something of which every human being is capable. To repeat the phrase from the Critique of Pure Reason, "the multitude of the vulgar which for us is most (inaudible)" of which every human being is capable whether he is intelligent or stupid.

We can, therefore, say as has often been said, that Kant's moral teaching is democratic which does not mean that Kant is politically a democrat. That is only in a very qualified sense. In the most important respect all men are equal.

Let us contrast this with the equality teaching prior to Kant, especially that of men like Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau. They also say that all men are by nature equal in the most important respect. They mean by that that all men are equal regarding the desire for self-preservation. They drew the further conclusion that since men are equal in this respect they all have the right to the means of self-preservation and, most important, all men are equally the judge of the means of self-preservation. Rousseau, the most radical of the three, draws the conclusion that, therefore, everyone must remain the judge of the means of self-preservation even when he has entered civil society. That means that he must be a member of the legislative body, i.e. direct democracy. The distinction between the permitted and unpermitted means of self-preservation is identical with the law.

This view of the predecessors of Kant leads to the consequence that we must respect everyone's concern with self-preservation and, hence, his legal rights. But the ultimate grounds of this respect - of the fact that he must be respected - is my concern with my self-preservation, i.e. an amoral fact. It is amoral because we cannot help being concerned with our self-preservation.

Another sign of the same thing is that one cannot respect a man because he is concerned with his self-preservation. We don't despise him for it, but we don't look up to him on this account. We cannot respect him for his respect for the law of self-preservation because this may be due to calculation. He does not do it necessarily because it is right.

Granted that the respect for self-preservation is most important. It is most important because it is most urgent because we cannot do anything else. Under no circumstances is it the highest respect which is shown by the fact that we do not look up to people merely because they are alive or preserve their lives.

Here is where Kant comes in. Kant builds the equality of man on the highest respect. The highest is the good will and of this good will every man as man is capable. This much as a reminder.

Last time we discussed the preliminary consideration of Kant at the beginning which is based on the teleology of nature. Nature cannot have intended man's happiness because this would have been guaranteed much better by instinct. Therefore, the only alternative is that nature intended man for morality or the good will.

Kant then goes on to give an analysis of the good will. The point which he makes first is that a good will is a will determined only by duty, that is to say by obedience to the moral law. The alternative to duty is inclination, which in German is Neigung. But I do not know whether "inclination" is the best translation. In French I would say _____ and not _____. Kant also means what was traditionally called natural inclinations, that is to say the inclination towards the preservation of life. An English equivalent would be "leaning." But in a wider sense the natural inclinations proper would be included. This is the first point which Kant makes. The good will is determined only by duty.

And the second point is that an action from duty has its moral worth only in the maxim according to which it was chosen, not in the intended effect or the purpose.

The third point is a conclusion from the first two preceding ones. Would you read that?

Reader: "The third principle as a consequence of the two preceding I would express as follows: Duty is the necessity of an action executed from respect for law. I can certainly have a leaning towards the object as an effect of the proposed action, but I can never have respect for it precisely because it is a mere effect and not an activity of a will. Similarly I can have no respect for any leaning whatsoever, whether my own or that of another. In the former case I can at most approve of it and in the latter I can even love it, i.e. see it as favorable to my own advantage. But that which is connected with my will merely as ground and not as consequence, that which does not serve my leaning but overpowers it or at least excludes it from being considered in making the choice - in a word, law itself - can be an object of respect and thus a command.

"Now as an act of duty wholly excludes the influence of leaning and, therewith, every object of the will, nothing remains which can determine the will objectively except the law and nothing subjectively except pure respect for this practical law. This subjective element is the maxim that I ought to follow such a law even if it thwarts all my leanings."

Strauss: In a note here Kant calls "respect" a feeling which is wrought by ourselves meaning not wrought by any other thing, like a feeling of attraction which some cookie might have and so on. Respect, we can say, is the proper response to the moral law. Let us read this note.

Reader: "It might be objected that I seek to take refuge in an obscure feeling behind the word 'respect' instead of clearly resolving the question with the concept of reason. But although respect is a feeling, it is not one received through any influence but is self-wrought by a rational concept. Thus it differs specifically from all feelings of the former kind which may be referred to inclination or fear. What I recognize directly as a law for myself I recognize with respect which means merely the consciousness of the submission of my will to the law without the intervention of other influences on my mind. The direct determination of the will by the law and the consciousness of this determination is respect. Thus respect can be regarded as the effect of the law on the subject and not as the cause of the law."

Strauss: So it is not as if we have the feeling of respect which then, as it were, projects something which would be the object of the respect. But the respect follows the law. It is a response to the law. Yes?

Reader: "It is properly the conception of a worth which thwarts my self-love. Thus it is regarded as an object neither of inclination nor of fear. No. It has something analagous to both. The only object of respect is the law and we need only the law which we impose on ourselves and yet recognize as necessary in itself. As a law we are subject to it without consulting self-love. As imposed upon us by ourselves it is a consequence of our will. In the former respect it is analagous to fear and in the latter to inclination."

Strauss: Let us stop here. We impose the law on ourselves. That is a point which will be taken up by Kant more fully later. And there is autonomy. Man is autonomous if he imposes the moral law on himself.

Here we also gain a better understanding of what Kant means by this equality of all men. Men are equal in the most important respect, namely in the highest respect. That clearly contradicts what Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau meant. What Kant says is reminiscent of the equality of men before God. But there is a difference. In the Biblical view the law to which men are subject does not originate in man. It is a law of nature, or divine, or whatever it may be but man is not autonomous in the Kantian sense.

There is one more point in the next paragraph which it is necessary to make at this point.

Reader: "What kind of a law can that be the conception of which . . . I should not act in any way such that my maxim could not be a universal law. Mere conformity to law as such . . ."

Strauss: That is, to the form of law. Lawfulness.

Reader: "Mere conformity to lawfulness without assuming any particular law applicable to certain actions . . ."

Strauss: No. Without assuming any law limited or directed towards specific actions. For example, it is not a law such as: Thou shalt not lie. Rather the lawfulness in general. Yes?

Reader: " . . . not assuming any law limited to certain actions serves a s the principle of the will. And it must serve as such a principle if duty is not to be a vain delusion and chimerical concept."

Strauss: Let us stop here for a moment. Kant has made clear that we act morally if we do not act from ulterior motives. That is easily intelligible. He says, furthermore, that there must not be any ends, merely the action itself is the end as we may say for the time being. Therefore the question is: What kind of law is that? Kant gives here this provisional answer. We have maxims. We always have maxims whether we know them or not. It is our duty to make them clear to ourselves. Then I have to will that my maxim on which I habitually act should be capable of becoming a universal law. The maxim should be able to comply with the demand for universal lawfulness. If it is capable of that, then the maxim is morally good. Otherwise it is morally bad. There is no law like Thou shalt not lie. The law is merely formal. You should also be able to will that your maxim should become a universal law. Kant will later on call this the categorical imperative.

The great question is: Where do we get any determination of our action? In the traditional view one would have to say that one must do the right thing in the right spirit. But the right spirit will not tell you what the right thing is. Kant says that the right spirit properly understood will also tell you what the right thing is. That is the great difficulty which we have tried to understand. Kant gives a provisional example. Let us read that. But first read the end of the paragraph which we began.

Reader: "The common reason of mankind in its practical judgements . . . And it is hard to tell whether it might not be more prudent to act . . ."

Strauss: "Prudent" in the amoral sense as it is commonly now used in English.

Reader: "to act according to the universal maxims and to make it a habit. . . Thus my maxim would destroy itself as soon as it was made a universal law."

Strauss: This provisional illustration of what he means by the moral law. Many people - perhaps most people - regard what Kant says as implausible. On what grounds? What seems to be Kant's reasoning here by which he convinces himself of the immorality of lying? Yes?

Student: It has a practical or consequential result.

Strauss: The word "practical" is really two-way here. Expediential. Although it is meant to be a strictly moral reason, it seems to be an expediential reason.

Student: Except that it is <u>a priori</u>.

Strauss: But does he not have to consider what lying does to men in human society?

Student: That may be how he learned the a priori, but he claims to understand in advance that there is a self-contradiction. You can have things disconfirmed either by experience or by a proof in advance. This won't work. The concepts contain a contradiction. It tries to show the concept of universal breach of promise contains a contradiction in that the term "promise" vanishes. And if you don't have promises you can't have lies so it was the "lie" which contained the contradiction.

Strauss: Then, as Hegel puts it, why do we want promises in the first place?

Student: Well, a part of the lie is that you want to be believed. To lie means to say what seems to be a promise, but is not. So the concept of "lie" contains that of promise. You universalize it and you find that it won't wash.

Strauss: In other words, only by regarding your case now as a very special case - as an exception from the general rule - can you lie.

Student: Well, I draw distinctions. I say, "in a good cause."

Strauss: So the point would be that the characteristic of immorality is that the immoral man regards himself - either generally or on any one occasion - as exempted from rules. This ingredient of Kant is crucial in Kant's moral thought.

Let me give you another example from Kant which perhaps shows the difficulty more clearly. That is taken from the first part of Theory and Practice which is not translated in your edition. Here is the case. Someone has a deposit in his hand whose owner is dead. The heirs do not know anything nor can they ever hear of the fact that he has deposited that thing with this man. Present this case to a child of even eight or nine years old. At the same time the owner of this deposit without his fault - that is the possessor not the owner - is in this present moment in a very miserable state. They are a sad family depressed by need. He could get out of this predicament at once if he would embezzle or appropriate that deposit. At the same time, this man who is tempted by the embezzlement is a nice man, whereas the heirs are hard-hearted and luxurious in the highest degree and wasteful so that it would be as good as to throw the deposit into the ocean. Now we ask whether is can be permitted under these circumstances that the man may use the depoist for his own benefit. Without any question the eight or nine year old child would say, "No." The child would say that it is wrong for it contradicts duty. Nothing is clearer than that.

This, I think, is another and a more extreme case than the one which Kant raises here. Why do you laugh?

Student: The child answered, "No" because he identified with the profligate heirs. He's been having people like this virtuous possessor held up to him all his short life.

Strauss: Alright. Let us say that the possessor of the deposit is badly in need of money so that his wife can undergo an operation. Without the operation the wife will die and the children

will be in a terrible situation - morally in a very bad situation. In addition there is no medicaid. Is it then so clear? So there is a certain difficulty then. I didn't mean more than that.

We will leave it at this and ask Miss _____ to read her paper. Oh, is there still discussion? Yes?

Student: Is this concept based on the erasing of one's experience and directing oneself towards the ideal, i.e. if the world were perfect or if there were an afterlife and things worked out as they should then act according to the laws which would make them work out. If they're acting on that principle aren't they giving up on trying to straighten things out as they are?

Strauss: What would amount to giving up?

Student: For example, the example you gave about the woman who is going to die without the money. Take Plato's example of giving back to every man what is due him and what is due him is firearms. But when you give them back to him he goes crazy and kills everyone.

Strauss: But is not Plato's argument of an entirely different character. Kant would, of course, agree with Plato as a practical man. But if we understand his statement of the moral problem as we have hitherto, what is Plato's argument?

Student: Is it that you have to have a more profound understanding of the situation?

Strauss: In other words, the rule that you must return deposits is only a general one and not a universal one. But what is the grounds for the qualification? The rule to return the deposits is based on an assumption that this is a way in which you help your neighbor. If in a giving case this maxim of returning deposits would mean harming your neighbor then you would not do it. So the overall rule which lies at the bottom of the more specific rule and of the exception to the more specific rule would be a universal rule, would it not?

Student: Then in a man who would like to embezzle money you look for a more profound rule underlying the idea that you give money back to heirs. In other words you try to get a deeper understanding of why you would give moeny back to heirs and then form a different rule as your universal rule.

Strauss: But then you are led through an abyss of difficulties. Namely, why is it a humane or benevolent action to give money to people who will make very bad use of it? And you have to go first through this (inaudible) fundamentally. Whereas Kant does not do that.

Student: What I was saying was that if you do not undertake the responsibility to do that aren't you saying to some extent, "If we act reasonably, it doesn't necessarily bring people happiness because rational actions are not in accord with the experiential world, but with some ideal world in the life beyond."

Strauss: Yes, but we have not yet heard of this. Kant will bring in the future life. But at this stage of the argument he has not yet referred to it.

Student: (inaudible)

Strauss: It would be impossible to transform your maxim on which you habitually act into a law valid for all men, for all rational beings.

Student: Then why wouldn't it be just as valid to say that all men should lie and that if in this instance I tell the truth it would invalidate that maxim.

Strauss: Then you would destroy confidence.

Student: Then it rests upon something other than self-contradiction.

Strauss: That is the point usually made by the critics of Kant, that the experiential reasonings come in. But at this time let me say only this much. Even if there were such a thing as experiential reasoning in these examples and others which will occur in the second section, there would still be this difference (the minimum one would have to say): that the experiential reasoning is the ratio_____ (I will translate that) but not the ratio_____. That means that we can recognize our duty by making such experiential considerations - is this compatible with human beings living together or what have you. But we don't do it for the sake of humans living together, but for the sake of doing our duty. Because for the sake of living together we might do very immoral things. My country right or wrong and all this kind of thing. Whereas the morality may be only the reason of obligation. This we must see

Student: I was just wondering whether Miss _____'s point about considering the whole situation is actually contained in what kind of a maxim you want to state for your universal maxim. Of course the maxims can be stated in very different ways. Depending upon how general the maxim is it can take into account more or less of the actual situation.

Strauss: It would not be a maxim if it is merely a description of the actions . . .

Student: I only meant that one man might say that the maxim of a particular act of stealing is, "Don't steal." That can be universalized and it prohibits all acts of stealing. But someone else might say, "Steal from the rich and give to the poor." That is a maxim too. That is universalizable and he might want to act on that such that everyone would act on that maxim.

Strauss: Except that it is open to objection because of the indeterminate character of what poor and rich are.

Student: But one could also say that about the more general one about stealing.

Strauss: No. That does not suffer from indeterminacy because it forbids all stealing.

Student: Well, the question there would be what one defines as an act of stealing. For example, if a man has more than he uses on a lot maybe he doesn't have a right to that particular property, so maybe it is not his property (inaudible)

Strauss: But the right way is to question openly his right to the property before a court of law instead of stealing. Stealing implies the admission that it is his property.

Student: I'm not sure that that takes into account the other ways of stating the maxim like stealing from the rich and giving to the poor. Is it simply because that is not defined determinately . . .

Strauss: No. You surely would have to define what you mean by rich and by poor. If you mean that starving people may steal in order not to starve, this is generally admitted and it would also be admitted by Kant.

Student: But then you say that he should take all the time to go to court.

Strauss: No. Of course, if he is really starving he cannot wait until he gets the decision of the court.

Second Student: Kant himself distinguishes the transcendent order which is sort of perpendicular to the chain of being - distinctions without a material difference. The maxim, Kant would have to concede, on which an identical action is taken would be a very different maxim. So the embezzling possessor might say, "Oh no. My maxim has nothing to do with embezzlement. My rule of living is: Always act so to increase the happiness of everyone I can in proportion as they are close to me. I spread good around me and charity begins at home. And if everyone did this we would have everyone tilling their garden and growing nothing but roses."

Strauss: The problem here is not that charity begins at home, but that it trespasses on other people's grounds. Then you would have to say that everyone is under law or under obligation to take care of the interest of his family regardless of what happens to any other people. Then you would run into some difficulty.

Student: But the presupposition of this was that the money was going to do a great deal more good at home than it would with these spendthrift heirs. If everyone puts things where they will do the most good, then on the whole people will be doing quite well. Maximum utilization of economy.

Strauss: But the question which you would have to face is, "Who is to be the judge?" Kant, as you know, says here that these questions can in principle be settled by everyone. And here, the way in which you stated it requires a very high degree of . . .

Student: A computer.

Strauss: Yes. That would, of course, be incompatible with the autonomy - giving the moral decisions to computers.

Second Student: It appears that Kant, in order to make a law which all people will follow, has eliminated the role of discretion. In other words, if one thought that a law could be applied by men of good judgement one could say that men ought to take into account for instance whether a woman might starve if the money is not embezzled. But if one leaves this up to men (inaudible) then at least some men will be biased in their judgement and they won't be able to calculate the consequences properly whereas if you leave the law at its most simple and general level - that is no discretion or minimal discretion . . .

Strauss: That seems to be (especially from the examples I read from Theory and Practice) what Kant had in mind. But that is not true because Kant is concerned very much with judgement. But at first glance it does appear that every eight or nine year old could solve any moral difficulty which arises. This is not quite what Kant means. But he does give us cause to think that that is what he is trying to do.

I suggest that we now ask Miss _____ to read her paper.

There is one point which I would like to take up first. Kant speaks in this section of the alternative moral doctrines. One of them he regards as the best although it still is not sufficient? Which is that?

Student: Rational perfection based on ontology.

Strauss: Do you know any names?

Student: I would think of someone like Aristotle, for example.

Strauss: Yes. And, of course, in Kant's own age Christian Wolff. And Kant knew much better than he did the original sources. So, in other words, it is the whole classical position. What is Kant's objection? He rejects hedonism and other things without any question. Yet it is not this easy. Why is this notion of morality which takes its bearings by the perfection of our nature inadequate?

Student: I think for two reasons that I can recall at the moment. One is that saying our natures go towards perfection is already assuming what you would like to prove at the end. In other words, we are moral in order to make us perfect, but we are perfectable by the fact of our human nature.

Strauss: Yes. Could one not state it as following: The traditional doctrine which speaks, for example, of man's natural inclinations as good and the basis of goodness. How do we know that the natural inclinations are good? In other words, is there not a dogmatic assumption underlying traditional morality? The goodness of nature. Must this assumption not first be established?

Kant's answer is that we cannot presuppose the goodness of natural inclination. We cannot presuppose that there are any good ends, natural ends. That they are good has to be established which he is attempting to do in his moral works, especially The Foundation of the Metaphysics of Morals and The Critique of Practical Reason.

In a way, if we disregard the theoretical morality all these other doctrines are based on nature. Kant is the first to try to liberate man (to use an expression used by him) from the apron strings of nature. Therefore, the key word now is no longer "nature" but "reason." Therefore, there arises the whole question of formal law because every content would be taken from nature or from the spirits.

Now as regards the categorical imperative what is the relation of the good will which was the key term in the first section to the categorical imperative of which he speaks in the second section?

Student: The unconditionally good will is that which does not need the categorical imperative as an imperative because it is in its nature to act this way and only this way.

Strauss: In other words, only God's will would be a good will simply. What, then, is the characteristic difference of human will and why does the characteristic of the human will make necessary an imperative?

Student: Because the human will has a subjective element which is connected with the sensible world and . . .

Strauss: More simply, the human will is not necessarily good whereas God's will is simply good. Therefore, the law applies equally to all rational wills, but in the case of man the law has a crack of a command, whereas it does not have the crack of a command in the case of God. And what is the relation of command and imperative?

Student: inaudible

Strauss: In other words, the moral law has only in the case of man and other finite, rational beings the character of a command. But what is the relation of command and imperative?

Student: Is the command given by the will?

Strauss: Yes. But that is not the point here. Kant says that the imperative . . .

Student: Is objective?

Strauss: No. The imperative is a formula for the command.

In order to understand the categorical imperative, one must distinguish it from the alternative imperatives which are?

Student: The hypothetical of skill and the hypothetical of prudence.

Strauss: So the categorical imperative is distinguished from the hypothetical imperative. There are two kinds of hypothetical imperatives, the hypothetical of skill and the hypothetical of prudence. Now what is the imperative of skill?

Student: That is the hypothetical which commands you what to do if you achieve any given purpose that your will is able to achieve.

Strauss: An example.

Student: For example, if you would want to become a doctor then the hypothetical imperative would say, "If you want to become a doctor then you must go to medical school."

Strauss: A simpler example. You want to cut a tree, you must do thus and such things. So the imperatives of skill have particular ends. These ends are fundamentally arbitrary, contingent.

The imperatives of prudence differ for two reasons. In the first place, if we want to cut a tree or study medicine - we can always do something else. But that with which prudence is concerned is not something which we cannot want. Namely, it is happiness. So whereas the imperative skills have to do with particulars, prudence has to do with the whole of human life, with our happiness, with each one's happiness. And this end - happiness - is not subject to our arbitrary will. Nevertheless, imperatives of prudence have one thing in common with imperatives of skill. They both presuppose the ends. In the case of the imperative of skill let us take the cutting of a tree. We presuppose the end, the cutting of the tree. In the other case, we presuppose the end of happiness and then we think about the means just as in the case of cutting the tree.

In the categorical imperative there is no such presupposition of an end. The categorical imperative says, "Do this." The other imperatives say, "Do this in order to cut a tree, to become a musician, to become happy." The categorical imperative commands categorically without any "Why" and, of course, without any "If" or "But."

What is the general relation of this second section to the first one? Let us look at the titles.

Reader: The first one is "Transition from the Common Rational Knowledge of Morals to the Philosophical." The second is the "Transition from the Popular Moral Philosophy to the Metaphysics of Morals."

Strauss: So in the first section Kant starts or claims to start from what every ordinary human being without any training knows or is aware of. And here he starts from the available academic literature so to speak. That is what he means here by popular moral metaphysics. He starts, in a sense, higher and he raises higher. The point is made clear later on. The paragraph beginning on page 409.

Reader: "In this study we do not advance merely from the common moral judgement which here is very worthy of respect"

Strauss: Again, because the multitude is worthy of respect.

Reader: "to the philosophical as this has already been done. But we advance by natural stages from a popular philosophy which grows no further than it can grow by means of examples to metaphysics which is not held back by anything empirical and which, as it must measure out the entire scope of rational knowledge of

this kind reaches even ideas where examples fail us. In order to make this advance we must follow and clearly present the practical faculty of reason from its universal rules of determination to the point where the concept of duty arises from it."

Strauss: So the difference is to that extent clear between the two sections. As a consequence this section is much more technical than the first and the first crucial point is the elaboration of the concept of imperatives in the distinction of the various kinds of imperatives and especially to make clear the character of the categorical imperative.

There is one point on which Kant insists very much and that is that the hypothetical imperatives are logically described analytical judgements. Kant means by this that the proposition, "If I will the end, I must will the means" is an analytical proposition. If I understand the concept of ends I see that it implies means. The categorical imperative, however, has the character of a synthetic judgement a priori, i.e. it belongs to the more interesting kinds of judgements. We will begin at this point next time.

Seminar on Kant Session VII

April 25, 1967

Now there is one point which I believe we have not considered. Kant's Metaphysics of Morals - as well as moral philosophy in general - belongs to the sphere of practical reason which is understood in contradistinction to theoretical reason. Now what does practical reason mean? We see the reason related to practice. According to the view prevailing at present there is no practical reason. Or, to speak in more academic terms, there are no practical sciences. For example, even such a practical thing as home economics is, of course, a theoretical pursuit. One could make a distinction between theoretical and applied sciences, but practical sciences are not applied sciences. Applied sciences are theoretical sciences which are then afterwards applied to practical problems.

A practical science is one which is independent of theoretical sciences and essentially practical. The notion of practical sciences stems from Aristotle. They have principles of their own which cannot be reduced to theoretical principles.

There is an equivalent of that in our age insofar as in the common practice of the social sciences people take it for granted that the starting point - the highest principles - of the social sciences to the extent to which they refer to human actions are values. And these values are not theoretical principles and this is emphasized all the time. According to the crudest view - which is now very powerful - values are simply products of emotions on the lowest level of likes and dislikes. But these values - according to the present-day understanding - are not (in Kant's language) categorical. They are hypothetical. Say, someone may be enamoured of liberal democracy. Then he will look at political and social matters from the point of view of liberal democracy. But this is just his preference. He may have a preference for collectivism and that is - from the point of view of social science as feasible and reasonable as the other.

There is, nevertheless, one great difference between Aristotle and Kant, although they agree as to the irreducibility of practical knowledge of rational science. The difference is this. I think that I am able to draw this schema. (on blackboard) Let us assume that this is the individual or the group concerned with action. It looks primarily at the end or ends. Then one seeks means for these ends. One does not look beyond the ends. One does not make an attempt to reduce these ends to something more fundamental nor primary. Aristotle and Kant agree as to this. Is there any difficulty in my picture?

Student: I'm not sure who you are talking about here. Is this Aristotle or Kant?

Strauss: I am speaking now of what practical knowledge as such means. Now let us see the difference between Kant and Aristotle.

This is the point of view which Kant preserves more radically than any other thinker. But in Aristotle it is only a part of a larger whole.

So Kant stands all the time - even in his most subtle or abstract reflections - at the same point at which the common actor stands. He only states it more radically. But this position is exactly that of the common man.

Aristotle, however, if one takes his Ethics as a whole - say the whole ten books and not merely the earlier part - somehow stands here. Aristotle sees this whole sphere of action from without. The reason is that for Aristotle the whole practical sphere is subordinate - the whole practical life is subordinate - to the theoretical life. Is this clear?

For Kant just the opposite is true. All theoretical knowledge ultimately is in the service of practical reason.

I will illustrate this a bit by contrasting Aristotle's approach with that of Plato. When Aristotle speaks of the virtues - the moral virtues - in his Ethics, he just presents them as they are known (more or less clearly) to acting men. For example, that something is a virtue or a vice is - to begin with - sufficiently known so that the virtue in question is praised and the vice in question is blamed. Aristotle does not go much beyond that. He does go beyond it by giving, say, a more detailed and circumstantial description, say, of courage or of liberality than we would be able to do offhand. But it is fundamentally what every man in ordinary life means by these things.

Plato (especially in The Republic) proceeds in a very different way. Plato speaks of the various virtues, but he tries to show that there are and can be only these and these virtues, that is to say, four. This is because the virtues are qualities of the soul, and the soul has these and these parts. So one can say that Plato deduces the virtues of which he speaks from something theoretically known, the character of the soul.

In spite of this one can say - at least at first glance - that there is a very close connection between Kant and Plato rather than between Kant and Aristotle as is sufficiently indicated by these facts: Plato, in contradistinction to Aristotle, says that virtue is knowledge. You can turn this around, too, and say that knowledge is virtue. This would seem to mean that there is no purely theoretical knowledge once you go beyond the secondary sciences and arts like mathematics and the common arts. The second point - the highest principle at which Plato arrives - is called by himself the good or the idea of the good. This obviously is somehow connected with the good for man. This much about this point.

To be somewhat more specific, one may call Kant's position - the position peculiar to Kant - moralism. I do not mean to use this now in a polemical or negative sense. I mean by moralism the view that morality is the one thing needful. Everything else can be questioned as he stated at the beginning of the Foundations. Morality alone cannot be questioned.

Let us contrast this with the view which is seen, for example, in Thomas Aquinas' Summa contra Gentiles, Book III, Capter 34 where Thomas tries to show that morality cannot be the highest. "All moral acts are orderable to something else." For example, just is ordered to keeping peace among men. Here you see the difference between Thomas - and that means also Aristotle. Morality is not directed towards something else. It is the only thing unqualifiedly, intrinsically good. It is good without any reference to anything else.

Kant claims that this latter view is in agreement with commonsense and is, in fact, the only philosophic view possible that is in agreement with commonsense. Surely, commonsense may be said to assert that the good man does the right things in the right spirit, meaning for their own sake and not for fear of punishment or in anticipation of reward or with anything in mind except the consciousness of having done the right thing.

If we do the right things for their own sake, there cannot be anything else for the sake of which we are to do them. Morality serves no end outside of itself. It does not presuppose any such end. Therefore, if we take doing the right thing in the right spirit as the simple formula of morality, morality leads to the famous formalism of Kant. There cannot be any end which explains or justifies the categorical imperative.

But Kant must show - if his entire enterprise is not to be in vain - that the form somehow applies the matter. In other words, that the right spirit - the good will, the spirit of obedience and respect for the moral law - necessarily produces as it were, the right things. Kant speaks of the good wil which he also calls from time to time the pure will. The question is: Is such a will possible?

Kant makes quite clear that the possibility of the good will cannot be proven from any experience. We may believe that we know a man of the greatest moral excellence, yet we cannot see into his heart. Whether he does the right things for their own sake and not for some calculation like good reputation or not to appear foolish or inconsistent or what have you, we cannot know. I think that we should read one passage on this subject. It is in the second section of the Foundations a bit after 419.

Reader: "To see how the imperative of morality is possible"

Strauss: The imperative of morality is the categorical imperative.

Reader: " . . . is, then, without doubt the only question needing an answer. It is not hypothetical, and thus the objectively conceived necessity cannot be supported by any presupposition, as was the case with the hypothetical imperatives."

Strauss: The hypothetical imperatives like the imperatives of skill or the imperatives of prudent calculations. They are hypothetical because there is no moral necessity to accept the ends which they serve. Therefore, the imperatives are hypothetical. Now we come to the point. Go on.

Reader: "But it must not be overlooked that it cannot be shown by any example . . . But in such a case the so-called moral imperative, which as such appears to be categorical and unconditional, would be actually only a pragmatic precept which makes us attentive to our own advantage and teaches us to consider it."

Strauss: In other words, we cannot know through experience that any man - ourselves or other people - ever acted morally.

Now I will read to you or remind you of some passages in the 51st psalm where David prays: "Create in me a clean heart, O God and renew a right spirit within me." And, a bit later: "O Lord, open Thou my lips and my mouth shall show forth thy praise." In other words, purity of heart is possible only through God's assistance, through God's initiative. This precisely is denied by Kant. Man is not essentially in need of God's cleansing or purifying his heart. Man can be pure of heart, he can have a good will without divine grace. This is implied in the fact that the moral law is the law of reason and that man's own reason - not God's reason - dictates that law.

In conclusion to these introductory remarks, let me return to the difficulty which I stated earlier. How can the form of the law produce the matter? I referred earlier in this course to Rousseau's doctrine of the general will. When he uses the phrase "generalizing the will" - we have a will prior to any action of ours as members of a legislative assembly. Then, when we act in an assembly we are compelled to generalize the will because what we are determining now is not what I will, but a law. Therefore, I have to look at my will - for example, my will not to pay taxes - in the form of a proclamation that no one shall pay taxes. Then I see that my previous will is foolish.

Kant radicalizes this much beyond the realm of politics. He speaks not of the frivolous will only - willing this or that or not willing this or that - but of the maxim on which I am inclined to act. Then I have not merely to generalize, but to universalize my maxim and if my maxim stands the test of universalization, then it is permitted or moral and failing that it is immoral.

So, then, the matter which we need is supplied by the maxims. We always have maxims, but the morality is not supplied by the saxims. The morality of the maxims is only in their ability to be universalized. Is this point clear?

It seems, then, that the question of the matter does not arise. The precise solution to this problem occurs not in the Foundations of the Metaphysics of Moralis, but in the somewhat later work, The Critique of Practical Reason. Will you read please on page 72, the third paragraph. One moment, though. This is from the section called "Of the Typic of Pure Practical Judgement." We cannot go in the short time which we have at our disposal into this very technical language of Kant. We will simply disregard the difficulties involved in that.

Reader: "The rule of judgment . . ."

Strauss: "The rule" I would underline. I emphasize that.

Reader: "The rule of judgment according to the laws of pure practical reason is this: If the action you propose were to take place by a law of the system of nature of which you yourself are a part . . ."

Strauss: Just as in Rousseau's scheme you are a part of the assembly which decides about paying or not paying taxes. So, it would still make sense if you looked at a South Sea Island assembly and were to say, " No. No taxes there." But here of a system of nature of which you are a part.

Reader: "of which you yourself are a part, you could regard it as possible through your will."

Strauss: "Through your will." That is important. Both. You are a member of that "assembly" or that whole. And you are responsible. You regard it as possible through your will.

Reader: Everyone does, in fact, decide by this rule as to whether actions are good or evil . . . This comparison of the maxims of his actions with the universal natural law, therefore, is not the determining ground of his will."

Strauss: That is crucial. It is not the determining ground of his will because, on the basis of mere calculation, it might well pay to lie and be uncharitable and so on. Yes?

Reader: "But such a law"

Strauss: And here he speaks of a general, natural law.

Reader: "But such a law is still a type for the estimation of the maxim according to moral principles. If the maxim of action is not so constituted as to stand the test of being made the form of a natural law in general, it is morally impossible, though it may still be possible in nature."

Strauss: Let us stop here. In other words, there is (as we will see later in the Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals) one strict formula and that is the one which we have just read. But then there are also types, as Kant calls it, or as one can say, symbolic presentations of the moral law which are very helpful for us to make clear the meaning of the moral law, although we must not take those types as literally true.

Now let us skip the end of this paragraph as well and the next, and then go on.

Reader: "Furthermore, since of all intelligible objects, absolutely nothing is known except freedom through the moral law . . . the present remarks should serve to guard against counting among the concepts themselves what merely belongs to the typic of the concepts."

Strauss: "Typic" meaning merely the symbolic presentation so that we can make it clearer to ourselves. As it were, we can

have a kind of image of the moral law. It is not the moral law proper. Yes?

Reader: "This, as the typic of judgement guards against the empiricism of practical reason which bases the practical concepts of good and evil merely on empirical consequences, on so-called happiness."

Strauss: Now we come to the sentence which is crucial.

Reader: "Happiness and the infinite useful consequences of a will determined only by the maxim of helping itself . . ."

Strauss: I believe that this is a printing error already in the German and it means self-love and not self-help. So read it as if it means that.

Reader: So happiness "will be determined only by the maxim of self-love."

Strauss: Although happiness in the infinite useful consequences of a will determined by self-love, and we add "alone."

Reader: "By self-love alone could, if this will made itself into a universal law . . ."

Strauss: A universal law of nature.

Reader: "Of the universal law of nature certainly serve as a very adequate type for the morally good, but still not be identical with it."

Strauss: In other words, if you look at any action from this point of view, if you want to be happy you love yourself and you can't help loving yourself, and now you consider your self-love in the form of a universal law meaning that everyone else is as much entitled to his self-love as you are to yours. And you see this as a natural law, i.e. everyone must and should be concerned with self-love. This is a typique, a symbolic presentation of the moral law because what determines your will is not your self-love, but the universality of the principle. It is only a form of knowing what you may or may not do. We have to keep this in mind when we come later on to the examples.

Let us now return to the Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals in the neighborhood where we left off. That is to say, roughly page 420.

In the sequel here Kant still leaves it open how the categorical imperative is possible. This question will be discussed in the third section. For the time being he is only concerned with the formula of the categoric imperative. This formula is given on the top of page 421.

Reader: "There is, therefore, only one categorical imperative. It is: Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law."

Strauss: This is the strict and the only strict formula.

Skip the next paragraph and then go on.

Reader: "The universality of law according to which effects are produced constitutes what is properly called nature in the most general sense (as to form)"

Strauss: Only with a view to the form. That is the meaning. Nature according to its form is caracterized by universality of its laws regarding effects. That is, the law of cause and effect.

Reader: ". . . i.e., the existence of things so far as it is determined by universal laws. By analogy, then, the universal imperative of duty can be expressed . . ."

Strauss: "Could" not "can". That is very important.

Reader: ". . . could be expressed a follows: Act as though . . "

Strauss: "As if." In other words, there is perfect agreement in substance between the Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals and that crucial section of the Critique of Pure Reason regarding the typique, only Kant does not explicitly speak of it here. This is a typical or in Kant's sense a symbolical presentation of the moral law and not the strict formula as was stated before. Kant reasoned this in order to show how the categoric imperative supplies some content.

Now let us read the first example. The second paragraph after that.

Reader: "A man who is reduced to despair by a series of evils feels a weariness with life but is still in possession of his reason sufficiently to ask whether it would not be contrary to his duty . . ."

Strauss: To ask himself.

Reader: " . . . to ask himself whether it would not be contrary to his duty to take his own life. Now he asks . . ."

Strauss: No. Now he makes an experiment. It is not very literal but it is much better than "asks." Now he tries.

Reader: He considers.

Strauss: No. It has a somewhat stronger meaning than "considers." He steps forward, as it were. Yes?

Reader: " . . . he makes an experiement whether the maxim of his action could become a universal law of nature. His maxim, however, is: For love of myself, I make it my principle to shorten my life when by a longer duration it threatens more evil than satisfaction. But it is questionable whether . . ."

Strauss: No. The only thing still questionable is this. This is his maxim. There is only one question left, namely:

Reader: "But it is questionable whether this principle of self-love."

Strauss: This principle of self-love as stated. I.e., if life threatens more evils than it promises good - whether this maxim of self-love can become a universal law of nature.

Reader: "One immediately sees . . ."

Strauss: No. Kant is not so rash. "Sees soon."

Reader: "One sees soon a contradiction in a system of nature whose law would be to destroy life by feeling whose special office is to impel the improvement of life. In this case it would not exist as nature; hence that maxim cannot obtain as a law of nature, and thus it wholly contradicts the supreme principle of all duty."

Strauss: You see the point which you must understand and which Kant makes clear - although insufficiently clear in this case - is that this is an argument based on the typique and not on the categorical imperative proper. The key point is that the man who makes this reflection is already prepared to obey the moral law. He is still sufficiently in possession of his reason that he can ask himself. In other words, he has not become insane or almost insane. He still consults his conscience and, of course, he is willing to consult his conscience. That is the point. Otherwise, he would simply obey the maxim of his self-love.

There is another point. The principle of self-love is a form of the principle of happiness. What does this man know here? That from this point on he will have much more evils than good? That we cannot know. Life threatens evils and promises less pleasures. We cannot know it. What the moral question does is, in the first place, to make him distinguish between what he knows and what he believes to know. And as a sane civil man he would act not merely on what he believes to know, but on what he knows. So he cannot know that five minutes after he has committed suicide his presence there may be of the greatest value to other human beings, and thus indirectly to himself because of the satisfaction he would have derived from having helped other human beings. That is a single example.

Now, let us take the next example.

Reader: "Another man finds himself forced by need to borrow money. He well knows that he will not be able to repay it, but he also sees that nothing will be loaned him if he does not firmly promise to repay it at a certain time. He desires to make such a promise . . ."

Strauss: In other words, he is tempted.

Reader: ". . . but he has enough conscience to ask himself . . ."

Strauss: He has <u>still</u> enough conscience, although the temptation may be great. So these reflections which Kant sketches here are made of men only to the extent to which they are willing to consult their conscience. An unscrupulous crook would not even

begin to make such reflections. This is his meaning when he says that this is the sphere of practical reason. These are not theoretical perceptions. Let us finish this.

Reader: "He asks himself whether it is not improper and opposed to duty to relieve his distress in such a way. Now, assuming he does decide to do so, the maxim of his action would be as follows: When I believe myself to be in need of money. . ."

Strauss: You see that here he qualifies, "When I believe myself to be in need of money." How does he know that? You may say that of course he will know it. But it is still a very good question. Go on.

Reader: "When I believe myself to be in need of money, I will borrow money and promise to repay it, although I know I shall never do so."

Strauss: That he knows, whereas the first thing he believes. Yes?

Reader: "Now this principle of self-love or of his own benefit may very well be compatible with his whole future welfare, but the question is whether it is right. He changes . . ."

Strauss: No. "I change." Kant is saying it. He doesn't look at it from without. He looks at it from within.

Reader: "I change the pretension of self-love into a universal law and then puts the question: How would it be if my maxim became a universal law? . . . no one would believe what was promised to him but would only laugh at any such assertion as vain pretense."

Strauss: With such a law I would will to deny the very purpose which my maxim presupposes. The maxim presupposes the purpose of getting money under false pretenses. But if I universalize the maxim I see that I would deny the very purpose which my maxim presupposes. Here again you see that the reflection liberates from a delusion. From the delusion that I know myself to be in need of money. Now you will say that anyone who has every suffered from lack of funds will say that he knew at that time that he was in need of money. But take it at a somewhat larger view. In the first place, sometimes we believe that we are in need of money because we wish to keep a certain standard of living, and that is not true need of money when we have the alternative - if we are perfectly honest - to cut out.

But let us look at it from a different point of view and assume that money is needed according to the strictest conscience. What do I exclude if I say that I must steal or cheat? That I know or believe that I know that I must not honestly beg. This is still open to me. Whether I will get the money that I need I do not know. No beggar knows that. That is still possible. Most of us are prevented from doing that because we have - from a moral point of view - foolish pride. That is not knowledge.

The same considerations apply - with minor modification - to the two last examples on the two following pages.

Let us now read the paragraph following these examples.

Reader: "The foregoing are a few of the many actual duties, or at least of duties we hold to be actual . . ."

Strauss: So this is still a preliminary discussion. Kant does not say that these are duties in the strict sense. That will come out only when he comes to the Metaphysics of Morals proper as distinguished from the Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals.

Reader: " . . . whose derivation from the one states principle is clear. We must be able to will that a maxim of our action become a universal law; that is the canon of the moral estimation of our action generally."

Strauss: Let us stop here. In the sequel Kant explains - and I think that we discussed this earlier - that when we - as conscientious people (as not crooked people) - when we transgress our duty we make this compromise, this deal: only this time or only I. I.e., we know that it is an exception. And this exception is precisely what contradicts the universality of the moral law.

One can also say, "Could a crook not will these immoral actions or maxims?" Or rather, "Could a crook not will that a maxim of his action be made into a universal law?" I would say that a crook would not dream of willing it. The thought - as it were - would not occur to him or he would consult his conscience and then he would not be simply a crook. Or are there men who are crooks on principle? That would be the question.

Kant would say that if there are crooks from principle who say, "I ought to be a crook and therefore I am a crook," then Kant would say that his principle is self-contradictory.

But I have forgotten about Mr. _____.

Student: I wanted to ask whether Kant believed that by making clear the nature of morality he would induce more crooks to consult their consciences. There is a footnote to a letter asking why moral odification isn't doing better, and he said that if teachers had their ideas straight they would be able to persuade more people to be moral. So does not he intend to make clear to people not only that they should consult their consciences, but to actually induce more people to consult their consciences?

Strauss: What Kant meant by that is this: If people do not take the moral law in the strictest possible sense in which Kant means it, and have all kinds of recommendations to it from ulterior motives, that really leads to a weakening of the moral fibers. Therefore, it is better to state the morality strictly and firmly on its true principles to get more people of true character. That is what he had in mind, and not to convince the crooks as crooks.

There is another point on page 424 towars the end where Kant uses the word impartial. "Impartial" meaning, of course a judgement which we would have to respect. Is a judgement not dictated by inclinations alone? A judgement dictated by judgement alone would be a partial judgement. And what we seek in such matters is an impartial judgement.

In the sequel on page 425 Kant again makes clear that the moral law must not be derived from any peculiarity of human nature which is implied in what we have said before. But there is one point which we should read.

Reader: "Here we see philosophy brought to what is, in fact, a precarious position, which should be made fast even though it is supported by nothing in either heaven or earth."

Strauss: That is truly an absolute principle, the principle which has not support in anything because it cannot be reduced to anything else. Yes?

Reader: "Here philosophy must show its purity as the absolute sustainer of its laws, and not as the herald of those which have an implanted sense."

Strauss: Meaning those which have the moral sense of which some English philosophers like Hutchinson spoke.

Reader: " . . . or who knows what tutelary nature shispers to it. Those may be better than no laws at all, but they can never afford fundamental principles, which reason alone dictates. These fundamental principles must originate entirely a priori and thereby obtain their commanding authority; they can expect nothing from the inclination of men but everything from the supremacy of the law and due respect for it. Otherwise they condemn man to self-contempt and inner abhorrence."

Strauss: That is a very powerful and impressive statement, but what I am now concerned with is only this when he speaks here of "who knows what tutelary nature." This is a very clear statement of the principle of Kant which distinguishes him from all earlier philosophers. This is the break with the classical position. The traditional view was that the foundation of morality is the nature of man or it is the same thing as the natural ends of man. This is simply rejected by Kant. We have to take the full responsibility for our action and for the principle of our action. We cannot delegate this responsibility to nature.

This term "tutelary nature" or something very close to it occurs in a well-known passage in the Preface to the second edition of The Critique of Pure Reason. Listen carefully. Kant speaks here of the genesis of modern physics which in a way is a model for Kant's own philosophical teaching.

Reader: "When Galileo caused balls, the weights of which he had himself previously determined, to roll down an inclined plan; when Torricelli made the air carry a weight which he had calculated beforehand to be equal to that of a definite volume of water;"

Strauss: You see, with previous calculations in both cases. Yes?

Reader: "Or in more recent times, when Stahl changed metals into oxides, and oxides back into metal, by withdrawing something and then restoring it, a light broke upon all students of nature. They learned that reason has insight only into that which it produces after a plan of its own . . ."

Strauss: "A project of its own." The project precedes the experiment. It doesn't produce a question, but he says, "a project." Or as he translates it, "plan." This project precedes all possible experiments and the experiment is only the answer concerning or disconcerning the project. Yes?

Reader: ". . . and that it must not allow itself to be kept, as it were, in nature's leading-strings, but must itself show the way with principles of judgment based upon fixed laws, constraining nature to give answer to questions of reason's own determining. Accidental observations, made in obedience to no previously thought-out plan, can never be made to yield a necessary law, which alone reason is concerned to discover."

Strauss: In this crucial passage he again speaks of the "leading-strings" of nature. This liberation from the leading-strings of nature which was underlying, as Kant knew, the whole development of modern thought and in particular of modern science, is in a way brought to its culmination in Kant's philosophy.

Originally we heard such a formula as Man should make himself the master and owner of nature, not to be led by the leading-strings of nature. Science for the sake of power. Or, "We knor or understand only what we make," as Hobbes put it and as Vico repeated it.

The final result of this development, which we see only in our days clearly which was already foreshadowed by Nietsche as we saw last quarter, that the very concept of nature loses its very evidence of meaning which it had throughout the ages.

At any rate, for Kant's philosophy this is decisive: The principles of morality cannot be found in nature whether nature is understood in the Aristotelian or in the Newtonian sense.

Kant introduces, then, in the sequel, another formula for the categoric imperative. In this case it is not quite clear - not as clear as in the former case - whether this is a type of the moral law or of equal rank as the primary formulation of it. Read only the beginning of the next paragraph.

Reader: "The question then is: Is it a necessary law for all rational beings that they should always judge their actions by such maxims as they themselves could will to serve as universal laws? If it is such a law . . ."

Strauss: What Kant did hitherto was only to say, "If we analyze what men ordinarily understand by morality we reach the conclusion that they presuppose a categoric imperative." But there

is still the question of whether what is understood ordinarily by "morality" is not altogether an illusion. Of this difficulty he tries to dispose in the third section which we will discuss next time.

Reader: "If it is such a law, it must be connected (wholly a priori) with the concept of the will of a rational being as such."

Strauss: Let us stop here and go on to the next paragraph.

Reader: "The will is thought of as a faculty of determining itself to action in accordance with the conception of certain laws. Such a faculty can be found only in rational beings. That which serves the will as the objective ground of its self-determination is an end, and, if it is given by reason alone, it must hold alike for all rational beings."

Strauss: Because otherwise it would not be universally valid and necessary and hence it would not be equally valid for all rational beings.

Reader: "On the other hand, that which contains the ground of the possibility of the action, whose result is an end, is called the means."

Strauss: Next paragraph.

Reader: "But suppose that there were something the existence of which in itself had absolute worth, something which, as an end in itself, could be a ground of definite laws. In it and only in it could lie the ground of a possible categorical imperative, i.e. of a practical law."

Strauss: Skip the next paragraph.

Reader: "Thus if there is to be a supreme practical principle and a categorical imperative for the human will, it must be one that forms an objective principle of the will from the conception of that which is necessarily an end for everyone because it is an end in itself. Hence this objective principle can serve as a universal practical law."

Strauss: You see, "can" which seems to indicate that this is a type and not moral law proper.

Reader: "The ground of this principle is: rational nature exists as an end in itself. Man necessarily thinks of his own existence in this way."

Strauss: In other words, he does it prior to any morality. This egocentrism belongs to man necessarily.

Reader: "Thus far it is a subjective principle of human actions. Also every other rational being thinks of his existence by means of the same rational ground which holds also for myself; thus it is at the same time an objective principle from which, as a supreme practical ground, it must be possible to derive all

laws of the will. The practical imperative, therefore, is the following: Act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another always as an end . . ."

Strauss: No. "Always also as an end.and never merely as a means only."

This is one of the most famous formulations of Kant from which much later moral thought is derived. Humanity here means not only the human race, but means the essence of man. So respect the human in man - man's human essence - in thy person as well as in the person of everybody else always also as an end and not merely as a means. In other words, we cannot help using other human beings as means. When we to a store and buy an orange, you use him as a means for getting your orange. You can't help that. But you must never use him merely as an end. And the same applies to you. To some extent you may use yourself as a means, but you must never use yourself merely as a means.

Of course from the basis of the Biblical tradition - although the Bible does not use this formula - this is not altogether a surprise. But if we look at the most powerful tradition preceding Kant in modern times, it looks different.

By the way, in Aristotle of course the great question is: What about the slave in Aristotle's teaching? Is he not used merely as a means? I think that Aristotle would say, "No," because what he calls a "natural slave" is treated as a slave and is made a slave for his own good, too. The trouble is that when Aristotle comes to speak of slaves in more practical terms they are not these touching idiots of whom I spoke at the beginning. They are obviously human beings who ought not to be treated thus. So Aristotle - and Plato still less - is very far from Kant.

But let me read to you a passage from Locke's Second Treatise on Civil Government, paragraph 11.

"Every man in the state of nature has the power to kill another both to deter others from doing the like injury which no reparation can compensate . . . or may be destroyed as a lion or a tiger, one of those wild savage beasts with whom man can have no society, nor secruity."

In other words, you hit this man without reason over the head until he is dead just as you would do in the case of a lion or a tiger. That is here radically denied by Kant. Under no circumstances can you conceive in particular of capital punishment - which Kant accepts as legitimate - in terms of this. If capital punishment is not compatible with respecting the man to be punished capitally as an end in himself, then it is not moral.

Let us turn to page 431.

Student: Isn't there the point in Locke that that man is no longer a man. He no longer has the essential nature of humanity.

Strauss: Well, there would be the case of insanity, and then he is no longer a rational being and that is a moot question. If you think about what the Nazis did with insane people, and how this was viewed by all non-Nazis, then you see that there is a difficulty even here. Whether even with a human being who has become insane one should not respect what we might call a reflection of a former sanity to say nothing of the fact - of which we are reminded by Kant - that we cannot tell. The man may regain his sanity even if all psychiatrists tell us that he cannot, because psychiatrists are not omniscient.

Now let us read on page 431..

Reader: "Objectively the ground of all practical legislation lies (according to the first principle) in the rule and in the form of universality, which makes it capable of being a law (at most a natural law); subjectively, it lies in the end. But the subject of all ends is every rational being as an end in itself (by the second principle); from this there follows the third practical principle of the will as the supreme condition of its harmony with universal practical reason, viz., the idea of the will of every rational being as making universal law."

Strauss: Literally, that would be "the will legislating universally." This is what Kant calls in the sequel "autonomy, self-legislation." Every rational being and, therefore, in particular man, is moral only to the extent that he is autonomous. What does this mean? Autonomy is used in contradistinction to heteronomy. That is, not only divine laws whereby God imposes law upon man, without man also legislating, but also laws based on nature, moral laws in the traditional sense. Both of these imply heteronomy.

There are some people today I have been given to understand who make the distinction between self-directed and other-directed. That is descendant from Kant's distinction between autonomy and heteronomy. And tradition-directed which is the third kind of direction, which these people speak of, is of course also heteronomy. When tradition directs you you do not direct yourself.

This concept is frequently misunderstood. Kant makes this clear in a later writing, The Metaphysics of Morals itself. Autonomy as Kant understands it means self-compulsion. The word compulsion does sometimes occur, but is translated as "necessitation" and so on. "Compulsion" is a much better translation.

This principle of compulsion is of great practical importance. We hear all the time of compulsion exerted in concentration camps, in prisoner of war camps and so on. Kant makes this point: Another being can compel me to do something to do which is not my purpose. For example, to crawl on my belly or still more terrible things. But another being can never compel me to make this particular thing - say crawling on my belly - my purpose. For if he compels me to do something which I do not like to do, my purpose in giving in to the compulsion is to escape death, torture, etc. Whereas his purpose is to extract information or to humiliate me. No man can ever compel another

man - and that is Kant's key point - to make what he wills his purpose. That can only be an act of the agent.

Therefore, even if God would command something, God could not - strictly speaking - compel us to do it. It would have to become our act, our purpose and this purpose is not subject to compulsion.

Let us read on page 432.

Reader: "But if we think of a will giving universal laws, we find that a supreme legislating will cannot possibly depend on any interest, for such a dependent will would itself need still another law which would restirct the interest of its self-love to the condition that the maxims of this will should be valid as universal law.

Thus the principle of every human will as a will giving universal laws in all its maxims . . ."

Strauss: "Through all its maxims." That is very important because the maxims come necessarily first, and the maxim must be capable of becoming a rule of universal legislation.

Reader: " . . . is very wd l adapted to being a categorical imperative, provided it is otherwise correct. Because of the idea of universal lawgiving, it is based on no interest . . ."

Strauss: Let us stop here. Namely, that interest which I have in giving in to that torturer in the concentration camp or prisoner of war camp. The interest which I have is to escape from the torture, etc.

An action can only be mine and can only be genuine if the purpose originates in me without such a previous interest, i.e. in obedience to the moral laws.

Student: Does that mean that anyone who does anything under orders is not morally responsible?

Strauss: It all depends on if the man who orders him is his legitimate superior and if the order which he gives to him is not flagrantly immoral. Of course, he has to obey. Take a very simple case which I know today is controversial. There is a war and a man is ordered to kill others. This is, of course, for Kant and almost all early moralists not a problem. The Biblical Hebrew command is not, "Thou shalt not kill," but "Thou shalt not murder." Because how could the Old Testament forbid killing since it commands killing all the time? But apart from Biblical authority, that was generally understood. Killing was not as such an evil act. Murdering is. The question is how to draw the line. Therefore, there was no problem.

But if it is a matter of killing especially non-fighting personnel - women and children - then it was understood since the 17th century that that was immoral. But now with our great technological progress where people can no longer distinguish when they fly between women and children or soldiers, it is a hard proposition.

Student: What if you are ordered to kill someone and if you do not kill them you will be killed?

Strauss: Well, that is one of those extreme situations on which one should not pronounce unless one has gone through such a situation and then one probably would not be able to speak about it any more.

Student: This discussion of killing as distinguished from murdering because Kant says that we cannot use empirical grounds (inaudible). And it seems to me that in defining actions like killing in contradistinction to murdering you have to use empirical grounds.

Strauss: What we have to decide - and we cannot do that with the material here - is whether the distinction as meant by Kant is based on empirical consideration and not on using empirical illustrations which is a different thing. In other words, whether this distinction does not have an a priori principle. We will find some matter on which to make a judgement when we come to his more specifically political writings.

Let me mention only one point which is very crucial in the sequel of the second part. What Kant has stated here in the passage we have read is that the dignity of man - man alone - is an end in himself. The question here arises: Is the dignity of man dependent on his being actually moral? That would come quite close to what Aristotle and quite a few other ancient philosophers have said. Or does it merely depend on his possibility - his potentiality - of being moral? Kant means the latter, but it is not always clear.

In this connection, on page 432 and 433 it becomes clear that all previous ethics differ from Kant precisely regarding this point which he calls the principle of autonomy, of self-legislation. Every action which is not based on my own self-legislation is, to that extent, immoral. It may still be according to duty, but it is not in the true spirit of duty.

Turn to the end of this section on the bottom of page 439. Read the beginning of the last paragrph on that page.

Reader: "From what has just been said, it can easily be explained how it happens that, although in the concept of duty we think of subjection to law, we do nevertheless ascribe a certain sublimity and dignity to the person who fulfills all his duties."

Strauss: Yes. You see here, if he fulfills his duty. The question is, "What about the man who does not fulfill all his duties? What is the dignity of man in this case?" As I said before, Kant doubtless means the latter. Otherwise, it would be very difficult since we cannot know of any man whether he ever fulfills his duty. Although he may externally do his duties, we can never know whether he did it in the proper moral spirit. So if the dignity of man would depend entirely on something which we could not possibly know in any case, then it would rest on a very poor basis. Let us leave it at that today.

Seminar on Kant: Session VIII

April [illegible]

I am sure that those who have not read the third section and even some of those who have will have had difficulty following your very good summary and interpretation of Kant's point.

Where do we stand at the end of the preceding section or, in other words, what is the function of this last section? The last section is, undoubtably the most difficult section of the whole work. In the first two sections Kant has given an analysis of what each of us has felt who has ever had the feeling of doing something wrong or of willing something wrong. What is implied in that? Kant claims that he has made clear the implications better and more clearly than any earlier philosopher.

The formulation is the categorical imperative. There is such a moral law which commands in this categoric manner without having any moral content as such, yet necessarily leading us to such moral content.

But Kant has not proven that this may not be a completely empty thing. In other words, men judge morally and - if we understand this moral judgement and if we take it seriously we are led to the categorical imperative. But in fact what we have might be some father image which has become sublimated so that it is now only duty and no longer any father to go or anything else. In other words, the most important question - is morality something real - is not yet answered at all until we come to the last twenty pages.

What Kant does there is called a derivation of morality, meaning from something more fundamental. That is a great difficulty here because if the categorical imperative is unconditioned, how can it be derived from anything else? Therefore, the solution which Kant found a few years later in his Critique of Practical Reason is that the categorical imperative is a fact of reason, the [illegible] reason. It is a fact irreducible to anything else [illegible] possibly figure out that there is such a thing [illegible] not confronted by it or - in present-day English - if [illegible] experience it, then it is there. This is a much clearer [illegible] that the one taken here. But how hard it was to come to such a conclusion can be seen from the fact that Kant was seeking for such a thing for a decade or more and that his mind arrived originally only at this very inadequate statement in the Foundations, Section III.

What would a derivation of the moral law from something else mean? What is the pre-Kantian [illegible] which Kant respected most?

Student: Inaudible

Seminar on Kant: Session VIII

April 27, 1967

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What would a derivation of the moral law from something else mean? What is the pre-Kantian ethical doctrine which Kant respected most?

Student: inaudible

Strauss: Perfection. And, of course, perfection means here the perfection of man's nature. So our moral knowledge as you ledge would be based on our knowledge of human nature and, secondly, on our knowledge of what perfection is. Both things are theoretical knowledge. So moral knowledge would rest on theoretical foundations. That is a very common view among philosophers of earlier times and Kant was the one who questioned this view most radically.

To look back for one moment at Aristotle in the Ethics, this is one of the greatest difficulties of the Ethics. If you raise the question: What is the cognitive status of the moral principles, you do not get a clear answer. You do not get an answer at all. They are presupposed in every prudential action, in every consideration. The ends - the good, moral ends - must come to side with you. Otherwise, your deliberation will be sly, cunning and not prudent. Aristotle also makes clear how men acquire these principles, namely by good breeding. But, of course, this is not a sufficient explanation because who bred the breeders? Therefore, there must be something higher. Or, to put it another way, how can we distinguish between good breeding and bad breeding? This question is not answered. At least, not explicitly.

If we look at the nature of man and ask Aristotle: What do you think is the nature of man? We all know what that answer is. From the traditional formula, man is a rational animal. And, of course, the morality will be located primarily in his rationality and not in his general animality because we assume that animals other than man are not moral although they can be very nice.

Therefore, one could expect that what Kant is trying to do is to derive the categoric imperative - the principle of morality - from man's being rational. Do you agree with me? Meaning rational without yet making a distinction between theoretical and practical. And there are traces of that in Kant's argument.

Kant accepts the Aristotelian view of man. But he understands reason in a different way than Aristotle does. When we look at knowledge and analyze it, when we separate out the rational element we see that reason or understanding is active whereas the other ingredient of knowledge - sensuality - is receptive, pas[illegible]

The[illegible] something like a pointer between the activity of [illegible] reason meaning theoretical reason, and action. Even in the purely theoretical reason, we are active and not receptive. Kant speaks here of the spontaneity of reason. There is a link hinted at by Aristotle in the Ethics between spontaneity and freedom. Freedom in the moral sense. Something of this is shining through at this point, but Kant does not follow this through and he is satisfied with if he can deduce the moral law from the [illegible] practical reason. Are we still in agreement?

Strauss: Perfection. And, of course, perfection means here the perfection of man's nature. So our moral knowledge as knowledge would be based on our knowledge of human nature and, secondly, on our knowledge of what perfection is. Both things are theoretical knowledge. So moral knowledge would rest on theoretical foundations. That is a very common view among philosophers of earlier times and Kant was the one who questioned this view most radically.

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Therefore, one could expect that what Kant is trying to do is to derive the categoric imperative - the principle of morality - from man's being rational. Do you agree with me? Meaning rational without yet making a distinction between theoretical and practical. And there are traces of that in Kant's argument.

Kant accepts the Aristotelian view of man. But he understands reason in a different way than Aristotle does. When we look at knowledge and analyze it, when we separate out the rational element we see that reason or understanding is active whereas the other ingredient of knowledge - sensuality - is receptive, pas[illegible]

The[illegible]on, something like a pointer between the activity of [illegible] reason meaning theoretical reason, and action. Even [illegible] purely theoretical reason, we are active and not receptive. Kant speaks here of the spontaneity of reason. There is a link hinted at by Aristotle in the Ethics between spontaneity and freedom. Freedom in the moral sense. Something of this is shining through at this point, but Kant does not follow this through and he is satisfied with if he can deduce the moral law from the will [illegible] from practical reason. Are we still in agreement? [illegible]

reason as

Now I would like you to state in your own words what the character of that deduction is. So we don't know yet anything of the categoric imperative. We know only that man is free. That we know.

Student: No. You can't know certainly that man is free. It is a necessary assumption that you have to make in order to act.

Strauss: inaudible

Student: Yes. The argument is so elaborate that he makes there. That is the section where he asserts that moral law is valid regardless of whether you know yourself to be free or that you merely have to assume that you are free.

Strauss: Yes. That is difficult. What is the conclusion which you draw given the improvements given in The Critique of Practical Reason?

Student: I think that the whole thing falls through.

Strauss: Also in The Critique of Practical Reason?

Student: No. Just in the Foundations. The idea of trying to deduce the categorical imperative as the principle of morality from the idea of freedom is - as he himself admits in Practical Reason - is the wrong way to go about it. It is an inversion of the proper order. It should be the other way around.

Strauss: But to come to the more specific point. Kant is trying to deduce the categoric imperative from the distinction between the phenomenal and the noumenal worlds. Can you state the character of this deduction? In other words, we know that there is a noumenal world.

Student: This is something that puzzles me. There are certain passages in here where he wants to say that we do know that there is a noumenal world. But then, on the other hand, there are certain passages where he says: No we don't. We have to assume it. We have to presuppose it. But we have no definite knowledge of it

Strauss: Kant makes a distinction, however, in The Critique of Pure Reason between thinking and knowing. We must think. We must think that there is a noumenal world, but we cannot know it. How can one state this in idiomatic English? We must conceive of a noumenal world. Otherwise, we get into hopeless troubles. But this remains a question mark. The noumenal world is, but we cannot know more than that it is. There is, however, some suspicion that it is peopled by intellectual beings, intelligent beings, and not by atoms or things like this which are not very impressive but which is part of Leibniz and other traditions which Kant follows here. So there are really great difficulties here.

But one can, of course, also see the difficulty in another point which I will show by this drawing. So here is this action, and this action is fully determined on the phenomenal level by preceding causes going back indefinitely. (Refers to diagram) This is the action and it is fully determined by preceding causes. Someone steals money because he is hungry and bad breeding, and, of course, the availability of something to steal. You can easily analyze it.

So here there is no place for morality because your actions are fully determined by preceding causes. And one reason why you act nicely is fear of punishment or desire for reward. So this is strictly amoral.

The same action is also fully determined from above, from the noumenal world, from the intellectual world. And, Kant says, we must make this distinction. This argument is, of course, not given here but merely referred to. Let us now assume that what would now be called the scientific explanation of actions were possible, and that the laws of causality were universally valid in every respect, and that it was the last word. Then we would get into the antinomy which tells us that causal explanation is the only explanation which we can give of experienced facts as experienced facts. But it is only an explanation of the phenomenal, not of the noumenal. This distinction is implied. Otherwise, you get into the third antinomy.

Now, let us assume that we have a decent action - a teller in a bank who refuses to be frightened by the robber and risks her life. Since we assume that it is is clearly a moral action, the explanation in terms of background and stamina and so on will not do because it would not do justice to the morality of the action. So the moral - or, for that matter, the immoral - in the action cannot be explained causally. Kant goes too far when he says that it is the same action. It is not the same phenomenon. We abstract from the moral core which means, of course, its either being moral or being immoral. Then we explain it.

Very few people today are Kantians. This difficulty has something to do with it. Many people who were Kantians say around 1900 or so, especially in Germany but not only in Germany, were neo-Kantians which meant that they abandoned the thing in itself - the noumenal world - in the way in which Kant himself had understood it.

Mr. _____, who is an Englishman, has written a very acceptable book called the Categorical Imperative. This is the only one which I have read. He tries to get out of the difficulties by saying: Kant's ethics is fine, but his metaphysics is the trouble. But I don't believe that it can be so simple. Kant was unable to set forth his ethical teachings without these borrowings from the metaphysics which he, in his theoretical writing, claimed to have destroyed.

I would like only to tell those of you who are repelled by this scholasticism as some people call it, or some people would say a certain German heaviness, that it is not a sufficient excuse

for anyone trying to understand our world - the modern world - because Kant is one of the greatest landmarks. Especially today when the only alternative on the academic level for all practical purposes, at least, to social science positivism or related things is what is called existentialism. This existentialism was, in very important respects, a return to Kant in the denial of the sovereignty of theoretical reason. That is the point at which Kant is aiming. The highest principle of which we can be aware - which we can know - is the categoric imperative. As far as the phenomena - the visible world - are concerned all this knowledge is relative and contingent. It is good enough as far as it goes, but it is never satisfactory.

The only unconditioned knowledge, the knowledge of the unconditioned, of the absolute as it were, is the knowledge of the moral law. The moral law is, as it were, like a lightening in a very dark night, but - and I must mix metaphors - it must be a lightening always accessible. So say a permanent lightening at least if we are willing to look up. Otherwise we wouldn't see it. In an otherwise absolutely dark sky. What its grounds are - and that is what he is fundamentally concerned with - we cannot know. We can have some idea that it will be a sign of an intelligible, intellectual world to which we and other rational, intellectual beings in the universe belong. But that we do not know.

Therefore, any metaphysics, any theoretical knowledge, can not be the basis of our understanding and obeying the moral law. This is what Kant is saying here. And existentialism - which rose in reaction to post-Kantian philosophy - can be said to be the view that formally the highest principles are not - and cannot be - subjects of theoretical knowledge. In this crucial point they agree.

Of course the situation is readically different because for Kant natural science - Newtonian science - has canonic character. It is human knowledge of the first order. Whereas, for existentialism - at least in the radical form as expressed by Heidegger - what we now call scientific knowledge is derivative from the fundamental way of knowing things which one can call everyday knowledge as distinguished from scientific knowledge.

Therefore, since everyday knoweldge takes it for granted that man is free the whole conflict presented in Kant's third antinomy doesn't arise. There you have a strictly deterministic world which does not leave room for freedom. This problem does not arise.

And then, when it comes to the analysis of morality, the distinction originally made by Heidegger between authentic and unauthentic being takes the place of the Kantian distinction between autonomous and heteronomous. I cannot go into these points, but I thought that I should at least mention them lest you see no immediate relevance of what Kant says to the situations which confronts us today immediately. This is, of course, not to say that in order for a question to be sensible it must be one which confronts us immediatdy, but we always have to start from what is nearest to us as Aristotle in his wisdom said.

The first thing which I think that we should do is to read the passage in The Critique of Practical Reason in which Kant corrects his previous statements. And that is in the note to paragraph 7. You can also read paragraph 7 itself.

Reader: Page 31 in the German, page 31 in the LLA Article 7. Fundamental law of pure practical reason. So act that the maxim of your will could always hold at the same time as the principle establishing universal law.

Remark. Pure geometry has postulates as practical propositions, which, however, contain nothing more than the presupposition that one can do something and that, when some result is needed, one should do it; these are the only propositions of pure geometry which apply to an existing thing. They are thus practical rules under a problematic condition of the will."

Strauss: Problematic is the same as what he calls here hypothetical.

Reader: "Here, however, the rule says: One ought absolutely to act in a certain way."

Strauss: In other words, without any conditions attached to them.

Student: "The practical rule is therefore unconditional and thus is thought of a priori as a categorically practical proposition. The practical rule, which is thus here a law . . . For the a priori thought of the possibility of giving universal law, which is thus merely problematic, is unconditionally commanded as a law without borrowing anything from experience or from any external will."

Strauss: This sentence puts us at the end of the second section of the Foundations. The thought a priori of a possible universal legislation is merely problematical meaning that analyzing ordinary moral understanding we arrive at this formula, but the whole thing - the whole sphere of moral judgements - may be a mirror. But yet it is commanded as a law unqualifiedly which you cannot say of what your father told you or anyone else when you were a child. Yes?

Student: "It is, however, not a prescription according to which an act should occur in order to make a desired effect possible, for such a rule is always physically conditioned . . . The consciousness of this fundamental law may be called a fact of reason, since one cannot ferret it out from antecedent data of reason, such as the consciousness of freedom (for this is not antecedently given)."

Strauss: Here, of course, is clear the difference between The Critique of Practical Reason and the Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, where he assumes that freedom is given somehow before, i.e. before our knowing the moral law. The true view - the final view - of Kant is that we know of freedom as a fact only on the basis of our knowing the moral law as a fact. The reasoning is very simple. Thou canst for thou oughtst. You

know that you ought. You know that through the categorical imperative. And this knowledge implies that you can, i.e. that you are free. And there is no need for an independent deduction of freedom. Yes.

Reader: ". . . and since it forces itself upon us as a synthetic proposition a priori based on on pure or empirical intuition. It would be analytic if the freedom of the will were presupposed, but for this, as a positive concept, an intellectual intuition would be needed, and here we cannot assume it. In order to regard this law without any misinterpretation as given, one must note that it is not an empirical fact but the sole fact of pure reason, which by it proclaims itself as originating law. Thus I will. Thus I command.

Strauss: "Sic volo, sic iubeo," is a quotation from a Latin poet, Juvenal. But in the original it is,"

"

This I will and thus I command. The will should take the place of reason. That is one of the prime cases where quotations may be embarrassing.

There is another passage on the same subject on page 42.

Reader: That is page 43 in the LLA. "This Analytic proves that pure reason can be practical, i.e. that of itself and independently of everything empirical it can determine the will. This it does through the fact wherein pure reason . . ."

Strauss: "Fact" is a word which appears rather rarely in Kant in this connection.

Reader: " . . . a fact wherein pure reason shows itself actually to be practical. This fact is autonomy in the principle of morality by which reason determines the will to action.

At the same time it shows this fact to be inextricably bound up with the consciousness of freedom of the will, and actually to be identical with it."

Strauss: Hence there cannot be a deduction. We will leave it at that.

Which of the other points which we have not discussed shall we take up in the short time that we still have? When Kant speaks of the categoric imperative that it is a synthetic judgement a priori this does not come out quite clearly. But I think that there is one point which he means. The categoric imperative is a synthetic judgement a priori. Why? Because it is an imperative, i.e. the formula of a command and the command can only be addressed to rational beings who may transgress as distinguished from rational beings who cannot transgress because they are simply holy.

This synthetic character of the categoric imperative is connected with the fact or is due to the fact that man may disobey. In other words it is due to the fact that morality has the character of an "ought." The "ought" cannot be inferred from any

"is," and, therefore, the "ought" has the character of a synthetic judgement and since experience cannot be the basis in this case it must be a synthetic judgement a priori. Does this conform with your judgement?

Student: Wouldn't the formulation have to be synthetic in itself regardless of the facts about it?

Strauss: No, because of what we have read in The Critique of Pure Reason and what we have read here. It is always the formula of the categoric imperative, but the imperative is the formulation of a command. You cannot say the form and so on. Nor can God say it himself because, of course, God is good. Subhuman beings cannot be good or bad. Man alone can be good or bad and, therefore, only for man can there be an "ought." That I believe is the root. And, therefore, you see also here the connection between the phenomenal and the noumenal worlds. Because man is a citizen of both the phenomenal and the noumenal worlds. This appeared in your presentation. This distinction is at the root of the whole difficulty. God could not be a citizen or a member of the phenomenal world.

Student: I have two questions. The supreme principle of morality is only a categorical imperative because it is addressed to an imperfect being. If it were addressed to God or to the angels or something it would not assume the guise of an imperative. But it would still have to be synthetic even for God or an angel wouldn't it?

Strauss: I am not sure.

Student: Paton threw up his hands. The quotations that Kant uses for the formulation of the third chapter - he doesn't have it in the form of an imperative. He has it in a statement of the indicative mood. In the third paragraph, page 447 of the German he says that an absolutely good will is one whose maxim can always have . . .

Strauss: Yes. That is hopelessly difficult when you read it.

Student: Yes. And Paton says, "Why did he introduce this formulation? Why didn't he keep it in the form of a categorical imperative?" Or in the imperative mood rather than transform it into the indicative mood.

Strauss: Here you bring up the question of Kant's way of writing. Kant is capable of very great beauty. But what is characteristic of these chief works of Kant, especially The Critique Of Pure Reason and The Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals is this. Kant wrote his books in an amazingly short time. The Critique of Pure Reason could probably have been cut down by Kant by a third if he had somehow after this long silence - he did not wish to submit himself to problems of cutting and perhaps this was an immoral act, but one could also say that the more urgent duty was to make it accessible to the public because he might die. But it is clear that this is not a book written like the Platonic dialogues where, when you have entered

you can give good ground as to why the author expressed himself in the way that he did.

In itself this is simply what Kant said, but one has to consider also parallel passages. Then it becomes clear.

Student: inaudible

Strauss: Shall we read that paragraph?

Reader: "If, then, the freedom of the will is presupposed, morality together with its principles follows from it by the mere analysis of its concept. But the principle is nevertheless a synthetical proposition. An absolutely good will is one whose maxim can always include itself as a universal law. It is synthetical because, by analysis of the concept of an absolutely good will, that property of the maxim cannot be found."

Strauss: What does this mean? When he speaks of the simply good will one would think to begin with of God. Can one speak of God acting on maxims as distinguished from that law? Go on.

Reader: "Such synthetical propositions, however, are possible only by the fact that both cognitions are connected through their union with a third in which both of them are to be found. The positive concept of freedom furnishes this third cognition which cannot be, as in the case of physical causes, the nature of the sensuous world in the concept of which we find conjoined the concepts of something as cause in relation to something else as effect."

Strauss: "Something else" is underlined by Kant. Something else and, therefore it is not an analytical judgement, but a synthetic one. Yes?

Reader: "We cannot yet show directly what this third cognition is to which freedom directs us and of which we have an a priori idea. Nor can we explain the deduction of the concept of freedom from pure practical reason and, therewith, the possibility of the categorical imperative. For this some further preparation is needed."

Strauss: The closest parallel to this passage occurs earlier in the second part on page 420 of the German.

Reader: "Secondly, in the case of the categorical imperative or law of morality, the cause of difficulty in discerning its possibility is very weighty. This imperative is an a priori synthetical practical proposition, and, since to discern the possibility of propositions of this sort is so difficult in theoretical knowledge, it may well be gathered that it will be no less difficult in the practical."

Strauss: And the note in which he explains why it is a synthetical practical judgement a priori.

Reader: "I connect a priori, and hence necessarily, the action with the will without supposing as a condition that there is any inclination to the action (though I do so only objectively, i.e., under the idea of a reason which would have complete power over all subjective motives). This is, therefore, a practical proposition which does not analytically derive the willing of an action from some other volition already presupposed (for we do not have such a perfect will); it rather connects it directly with the concept of the will of a rational being as something which is not contained within it."

Strauss: You see here this parenthesis: (for we do not have such a perfect will). Does this not mean that were we to have a rational being of perfect will - not the categorical imperative, of course - but the corresponding proposition.

Student: Yes. Here in Chapter 3.

Strauss: At any rate, I think that we can say with all due modesty that this third section is very difficult, and that it is not entirely our fault. We are fortunate in this case that Kant himself corrected his position in the Critique of Practical Reason in the passages which we read.

I think that it is not very practical of us to go into any of the more technical details of the third section Unless, yes?

Student: But you do think that the problems which were left in the Foundations were solved in the Critique of Practical Reason?

Strauss: This difficulty which he struggled with in the third section of the Foundations, surely. The great question which remains throughout Kant, from the Critique of Pure Reason on is this distinction of the phenomenal and noumenal worlds - the two worlds which are no longer the sub-lunar and the supra-lunar worlds (that had gone at the latest by the time of Newton). The manifest difficulties of Kant come to sight most clearly in his concrete moral teaching. This is not given in the Critique of Practical Reason or in the Foundations, but in the Metaphysics of Morals itself which Kant wrote still some years later.

What the present-day defenders of Kant say is that a criticism of Kant's concrete moral propositions does not affect the basis of his moral position. And this might very well be so. In other words, Kant might have been inexperienced in certain matters and, therefore have made these judgements. Yes?

Student: That is why I think that problems arose in the third section of the Foundations. I understand the underlying problem to be that very problem of the relations between the phenomenal and the noumenal worlds.

Strauss: Yes, but as far as the Kantian doctrine is concerned - we are not speaking now of what Kant might have discovered and which can be divorced from the manner and the context in which he presented it. But Kant's own doctrine stands with this

distinction. And, therefore, if this is a question of the distinction, then the Kantian doctrine as a whole has to be abandoned, but it might still have a very important court.

There are three points which struck me always as very strange in such a great and good man as Kant. The first is his definition of marriage which occurs in his Metaphysics of Morals. Marriage is a life-long contract of people of different sexes for the mutual use of the sexual organs. Now that sounds very funny. But then I thought about it and said, "How did Kant arrive at that? Is it only because he was a bachelor and had very funny notions?" I doubt that.

What would earlier moralists have said - say in the Aristotelian tradition? Of course, the purpose of marriage is the generation of children, procreation. Now this is sound and reasonable, but it is not universally valid. People marry and may have the firm intention to raise a family and, then, for whatever reason they do not have children although they make every effort. This is clear. And yet no one in his senses, or hardly anyone, has said that marriage ceases to be a marriage when there are no children because you would then be left with such interesting questions as: How many years do you have to wait?

The rest of the world has always taken childless marriages as perfectly respectable - perhaps unfortunate but perfectly respectable. And Kant does the same. That is, he must have a definition of marriage which does not include procreation. And to say for the purpose of sexual enjoyment - that would be incompatible with the strict moral view which Kant held. It would also be open to quite a few objections. For example, what would happen in the case of illness and so on.

Another reason: In the pietistic Protestantism in Germany it happened not so rarely that people married following the injunction of Paul, broadly, and yet had the firm intention if they could help it, not to have sexual relations. And Kant explicitly rejects this and, therefore, the sexual organs have to come in. That must be the core of marriage. That is one example.

Another is Kant's strict prohibition against revolution. Under all circumstances revolution is an unjust act. Without going into the question of the character of the tyranny - Kant omits all such considerations. Revolution is strictly forbidden.

But if a revolution has happened, and a revolution which brings about a more rational and a more just regime, then one should think that these criminals who have brought this about should be drawn and quartered and, of course, restoration of the old regime. No. Kant does not say this. In other words, he is perfectly willing to condemn revolution, but to also take them in his stride. That is another point which always struck me.

And the third point is one which Nietsche has mentioned occasionally. That is what he says in his later writing: religion within the limits of pure reason. He raises the question: Is there any empirical sign that there is something good - good meaning morally good, of course and not merely nice - is there

any prrof of that? That there is a good principle in man? Kant says, "Yes." And that is the fact that quite a few people in countries other than France - say, in Germany - were enthusiastic - in the early days - about the French Revolution. He says that these people did not have any interest in the Revolution. It did not bring freedom to them, only to another country. And yet what does this enthusiasm prove except the wholly disinterested enthusiasm and dedication to moral ideas?

Every school child knows now that most of these enthusiasts were the German middle class people who were in exactly the same position as the French middle class people.

Kant would say, and perhaps rights, that these three examples are only lapses when he was in a more or less drowsy mood, and surely do not refer to the core of his teaching. And there is no position today - as far as Kant's teaching is concerned - which has not been affected by Kant. Even the positivists. If you compare present-day positivism with British empiricism you see the difference immediately because the spontaneity of reasoning which orders the sense data - the sense data do not produce their own coming together and hitting each other, but they are brought about by a preceding organizing act - that, of course, stems from Kant. Yes?

Student: I wanted to ask with regard to the third section whether the categorical imperative is merely a priori. In the paragraph at the end of the section entitled, "Of the interest attaching to the ideas of morality," he seems to say that the proof of the existence of freedom and, therefore, of morality is that if we did not conceive of ourselves as being free, then whenever we thought of some moral action we would be contradicting ourselves by thinking of ourselves as, at the same time, part of the world of sense and part of the noumenal world. Is this not a kind of demonstration . . .?

Strauss: Yes. Well, to some extent, Kant is - as we have agreed - trying to get a deduction of morality in the third part, but he fails. And he is unconvincing not only to us, but to himself as is shown by the statements in The Critique of Practical Reason where he explicitly denies the possibility of what he is attempting in the third part of the Foundations.

Student: I was wondering whether there was not something convincing in that demonstration after all. inaudible

Strauss: Kant would say that, for example, a scientist who believes that he can give a scientific account of science, i.e. that a biologist or psychologist could explain the phenomenon of science in terms of his science. That would be an absurdity. Kant would say nevertheless that - to use his language - the spontaneity of reason is essential to reason and cannot be deduced from any earlier fact. That does not mean that moral reason, practical reason issues, necessarily in the categorical imperative.

Seminar on Kant: Session IX
May 2, 1967

You state here on page 5 of your paper, "I think that it can be shown that for Kant the fact that freedom cannot be proven or explained is necessary to the preservation of morality itself, that is morality rightly conceived." I think that that is true, but the explanation which you give on the following page does not quite satisfy me. It is possible that you mean the same thing that I mean and did not express it quite clearly.
→ If there were we could know or would know the intelligible world, the noumenal world. Then the knowledge of it would be the highest possibility of man. But since we cannot know it, and our only contact with it is the moral law, therefore, morality is a fact. I do not know whether you meant it this way. Yes? Good. That is Mr. _____'s paper.

Now for Mr. _____'s paper. You wisely refer to what Kant says in the Critique of Pure Reason on what he understands by an idea and, in particular, his reference to Plato's Republic as an example. In this connection Kant proves the wise words that it is possible to understand a great man better than he understood himself and that is what he claims regarding Plato.

Is Plato's Republic or the perfect commonwealth presented there an idea in Kant's sense? Kant says so.

Student: I would think so.

Strauss: But Kant may err. He may have understood too well, i.e. much to good for Plato.

Student: Well, it is really an interpretation of Plato because if it can be taken as an ontological thing . . .

Strauss: I do not know what you mean by "ontological" but one thing is quite clear: An idea in the Kantian sense cannot possibly be confirmed or disconfirmed by experience. There is no need or possibility of showing the possibility of an idea in the Kantian sense, whereas Plato in the Republic insists on the possibility of instituting the idea. So that is one point which is very clear.

But the other question would be: Is Plato's Republic as presented in the Republic an idea in Plato's sense?

Student: I suppose that it wouldn't be necessarily.

Strauss: Why not?

Student: It is a very hard question: Just what are the ideas? But I think that they are more basic than that.

Strauss: In other words, the perfect concept of the Republic is figured out, constructed in speech by Socrates and his interlocutors. Ideas cannot be constructed.

Let us turn now to our readings. First I would like to remind you of the question with which we are concerned in this course. The essays of Kant which we are going to discuss from now on are contained here in the English translation with the title, On History. So we are now concerned with Kant's philosophy of history. And that is the difficulty from which we started. The philosophy of history as such exists within Kant's horizon obviously, but what is the importance of it for Kant? The works dealing with this suject are not clearly a part of the system. Why is that so?

If we look at the crucial moral teaching of Kant - of which we got a glimpse at least - there is a categoric imperative which addresses every rational being and, therefore, every man as man regardless of time and place we would assume. The categoric imperative is followed up by the postulates of practical reason, two of which are God and the immortality of the soul. The other a life after death, a life in the other world. No reference to history.

In other words, the concern with history seems to increase as the concern with life after death decreases. That would be a sufficient reason, perhaps, why Kant in this respect still very old-fashioned regards immortality of the soul as more important than philosophy of history. Yet there is a philosophy. Why is this? What does the categoric imperative tell us? Act so and so. Where are we supposed to act so and so? In this life, in this world.

And this action includes also politically relevant actions. Therefore, to the extent to which certain politically relevant actions are commanded by the moral law we must be concerned with the outcome of these actions, i.e. with the human future. So there is - although it seems to be in a secondary fashion - a necessary moral interest in the philosophy of history. We will perhaps be able to say more about it after we have read more.

Now let us turn to the essay on the Enlightenment. "What is enlightenment," Kant asks. I think that today men would not write such articles, but there are quite a few people who write essays on "What is The Enlightenment?" meaning a historical essay. What is that movement of the 17th and 18th century which was called by Tom Paine "The Age of Reason?" What is this age? And Kant knows that he lives in such an age. In a way the critiques - especially The Critique of Pure Reason is the peak of the Enlightenment because the instrument of Enlightenment, the tool of Enlightenment - reason itself - is criticized by Kant. And, to that extent, Kant's Critique Of Pure Reason may be said to be the peak of the Enlightenment.

I will remind you of very obvious things. What does the Enlightenment oppose? Superstition. Fanaticism. Fanaticism which acquired only in the 18th century - I have not checked

on that - the meaning which it has now. Originally a fanatic was not an orthodox man. On the contrary. , for example. When he speaks of the fanatics he means those people who defer only to the Holy Ghost and not to the Scriptures at the same time. But I think that in the 18th century "fanatic" acquired this general meaning where it included especially the orthodox and not the sectarian people of the inner light.

Now everything is to be called before the tribunal of reason. "Everything which means, of course, revelation included. And it becomes quite clear from Kant's essay that the primary concern is religion and secondarily only with politics. In Marx too. So first is the critique of religion. Then comes the criticism of politics afterwards.

That revelation is called before the tribunal of reason does not necessarily mean that the thinker in question is opposed to revelation. After all, revelation may be reasonable and so it survives the test by reason. Never forget the title of a famous work of the Enlightenment, John Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity.

The key word of the Enlightenment in all the languages is "prejudices." What they are striving for is liberation from all prejudices. And if we realize that we see who - as has often been said - is the originator of the Enlightenment: the man who demanded this in the most ruthless manner. The liberation from all prejudices and, therefore, the doubt of every previously held opinion. And that was Descartes - universal doubt.

Now calling everything before the tribunal of reason means also from the beginning that one should try to establish a human society which is entirely according to reason. One must question also politically all traditions. What Burke later called prescriptions. And in the more extreme meaning of the Enlightenment it was understood that all men can be made rational and, therefore, full members of a rational society by enlightenment, that is to say by the right kind of education. In this sense Rousseau's Emile is the most outstanding work of the Enlightenment. Emile is exactly the case of an ordinary fellow who is brought up without any prejudices whatever. This meant, of course, that he had to be brought up under very special laboratory conditions where he could not be infected by prejudices, i.e. he had to be very well raised. Therefore, the richest educations comes in only when he has reached puberty, when he can accept religion in a perfectly enlightened, rational manner and not from his mother where he would be wholly unable to criticize.

A rational society. I refer here to another classic, to Hobbes. Opposed to the kingdome of darkness. Rational society, so to speak the kingdom of light. And by the kingdom of darkness Hobbes means especially the Catholic church as well as Calvinism. The rational society requires, then, that there be no established church. A state without an established church cannot be said to have any religion, Hobbes says. So the principle of the secular state which permits religion as a strictly private

affair. But the point is that the state as state does not have a religion.

The next step taken shortly after Hobbes's death by Pierre Bayle around 1690 proves that a society of atheists is possible. As far as I know that is the first time that such a thought was ever suggested. Whether or not religion is to be established and what kind or kinds of religion depends upon the sovereign whose power ultimately derives from the individuals. He never rules in his own right. That would be superstition, the divine right of kings. This ultimately derives from the desire of the individuals for security or prosperity. His duty therefore is to take care of that security and prosperity, i.e. not of their worship. That is not his business. That is Hobbes, Locke and so on.

Another point in which the whole thought of the Enlightenment is concentrated is that the sovereign - that is, the present sovereign (that seems to be trivial, but it is crucial. If the sovereign were not the present sovereign then the whole ballast of the past would hamper the present ruler. Whether the ruler is one man or a body of men does not make any difference. The concept of sovereign is indifferent to that distinction) The sovereign is in no way bound by the past. Reason is completely free from all the encumbrances of the past. And the enlightened sovereign - the sovereign who has studied Hobbes' Leviathan - will, of course, be wiser than all the wisdom of the ages and, therefore, it would be absurd to bind him by medieval things.

These few points I thought that we should remember. One more point which is perhaps more important than the previous points. There was, of course, what was called rationalism prior to the Enlightenment, especially in classical antiquity. Say Epicureanism which covers a great variety of things. That is surely a rationalistic position. But two points which we must never forget. In the classical doctrines, however radical, there is no notion of spreading the lights of popular enlightenment. What gives the peculiar character to the thought of the 18th century is the thought of the spreading of the propaganda of popular Enlightenment.

The second point is that in the classical parallels where reason and the full use of reason, i.e. science, is highly praised there is no notion of the use of science for the improvement of men's condition. No science for the sake of human power. These are the two crucial points and we will see that somewhat clearer when we go over the Kantian essay..

Now let us turn to the Kantian essay. The definition at the beginning. Enlightenment is the release from the tutelage for which he himself is responsible. Now what does this mean? Were, then, the first men capable of being enlightened because they were created perfect? This is not what Kant means as is shown by the sequel. There cannot be enlightenment before the understanding is sufficiently developed. Therefore, earlier men cannot, of course, be held guilty for their lack of enlightenment.

Given the proper development of the understanding - and only under these conditions - tutelage is a moral defect. The categoric imperative comes in here. The categoric imperative says, among other things, become enlightened, although that needs a somewhat longish deduction.

This brings us to the question which Kant does not discuss - at least as far as I know. Is the categoric imperative truly orderable to every man regardless of place and time, to earlier men in particular.

Now let us turn to the third paragraph of this essay on Enlightenment.

Reader: "For any single individual to work himself out of the life under tutelage which has become almost his nature . . ."

Strauss: Let us stop here. Tutelage has almost become nature. The tutelage exercised, of course, by other human beings. It cannot, of course, ever become nature. Why? Because man is by nature rational.

Student: And free.

Strauss: Yes. Rational and free. And the next sentence.

Reader: "He has come to be fond of this state, and he is for the present really incapable of making use of his reason, for no one has ever let him try it out."

Strauss: So, in other words, man's inability to use his own understanding is the fault of other men. What does this mean? These men are not enlightened themselves, I suppose, and they are happy in that condition because they are beneficiaries of the non-enlightenment of the others. You have here rudiments of Marx very easily recognizable.

Reader: "Statutes and formulas, those mechanical tools of the rational employment or rather misemployment of his natural gifts, are the fetters of an everlasting tutelage."

Strauss: "Statutes." The German word _____ reminds more immediately of the Greek word, _____. And "formulas." There are uniform formulae established by authority, ecclesiastical or political. And this is opposed to the individual self-legislation.

In the next paragraph he says that the public is more able to enlighten itself than the individuals. Why?

Student: The individual lives only in a certain period of time, whereas the public is historical.

Strauss: Since Kant would never use such a phrase how would you translate it in simple language?

Student: Individuals in general would not be enlightened on their own, but occasionally one man or two do get enlightened and they can pass it on to the following generations.

Strauss: In other words, there is a kind of tradition of reason. This thought is not sufficiently developed by Kant. Yet it is crucial. There would be two kinds of tradition. The pre-rational tradition and the tradition of reason, i.e. the scientific tradition.

Again he refers to the fact that the prejudices have been planted by some man without making clear what induced them to do so.

He emphasizes here that a revolution cannot bring about freedom from prejudices. As such, reason would merely lead to a new set of prejudices and not to freedom from prejudice. So freedom from prejudice cannot be accomplished by revolution, but only by the cultivation of the mind.

Enlightenment, he goes on to say, requires nothing but freedom. Freedom of the learned men in their writings. If men were permitted to write - and Kant doesn't add this because it went without saying at that time - in the vernacular so that simple and non-learned men who just can read can have access to that. This is the only necessary and sufficient condition of enlightenment. Public discussion by competent people, not by teen-agers. That is sufficient.

This leads to an interesting distinction where Kant uses terms in an apparently paradoxical way. This written speech of learned men he calls the public use of reason. The private use of reason is what you do, for example, if a bureaucrat uses his reason in his office and says that a foolish law has been handed down to him, that is none of his business. He has to obey. But in his capacity as a public man and as a learned man - say as an economist - he can write a criticism of that law. The most interesting case, of course, is that of a clergyman. Page 38.

Reader: "Similarly a clergyman is obligated to make his sermon to his pupils in catechism and his congregation conform to the symbol of the church which he serves . . . He will say, 'Our church teaches this or that; those are the proofs which it adduces.'"

Strauss: Kant goes very far here in avoiding this immoral act of lying. If the clergyman always says, "Our church says . . . " he doesn't lie. This distinction between I and Thee has frequently been used by heterodox writers before.

Now in the next paragraph.

Reader: "But would not a society of clergyman, perhaps a church conference or a venerable classis . . . as having been made in an unwarranted and malicious manner."

Strauss: In other words, it is impossible to lay down any unchangeable dogma. And it is impossible for anyone because the original destiny of man is progress and enlightenment.

Later on he speaks of another point which I would like to mention here: that the freedom of scholars as exists in Prussia under Frederick the Great is wholly harmless. Under Frederick the Great everyone could write what he wanted even against the King, surely against religion. One of his friends for a long time was Voltaire as you probably know. This is wholly harmless to public tranquility and the unity of the commonwealth. Why? Let us read the beginning of the last paragraph.

Reader: "But only one who is himself enlightened . . ."

Strauss: Namely, Frederick.

Reader: " . . . is not afraid of shadows, and who has a numerous and well-disciplined army to assure public peace, can say: "Argue as much as you will, and about what you will, only obey!" A republic could not dare say such a thing."

Strauss: So Kant here takes the side of what was called enlightened despotism. This thought - that you can have the maximum freedom of speech only under the strongest government, i.e. absolute monarchy - goes back to Machiavelli and is implicitly reasserted by Spinoza in his Political Treatise. And we find it in Kant too. How Kant will square this with the Rousseauean and Republican heritage we must wait until we come to his other writings to see.

Still, he goes on. Let us read the sequel.

Reader: "Here is shown a strange and unexpected trend in human affairs in which almost everything, looked at in the large, is paradoxical. . . . which finds it to its advantage to treat men, who are now more than machines, in accordance with their dignity."

Strauss: So freedom of speech guaranteed by an enlightened, absolute monarch is the best preparation for a true republic. By granting them freedom of speech they are becoming prepared to become enlightened citizens, and not by the practice of freedom prior to enlightenment. A point of some importance.

Is there any point you would like to raise. Yes?

Student: inaudible

Strauss: Yes. And especially he might have as a successor one like Frederick the Great had. Very brilliant and with whom Kant got into trouble.

Student: He became a republican after that.

Strauss: I think that he was a republican from the day on which he read Rousseau, but he tried somehow to manage.

This writing on the "Idea of a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View" is based on one premise which becomes clear from the very beginning and that is the teleology of nature. Nature acts towards an end and, therefore - because of this teleology of nature - there is a philosophy of history. Or more precisely, the reasonableness of history is only one part of the universal teleology of nature. How is this connected with Kant's moral philosophy as we have seen it? What is the connection between Kant's moral philosophy and teleology of nature?

Student: In the Foundations he speaks abou the development of individual's (inaudible) required by the formation of a categorical imperative which required that humanity always be treated as an end.

Strauss: More precisely, yes?

Student: The popular proof of the categorical imperative . . .

Strauss: No. Not a proof. He gives a type. Teleology of nature is a type of the moral law. Therefore, he can present for example our duty to develop our faculties as meant by nature for development as an illustration of the moral law.

In other words, what Kant is discussing here is the question: Under what condition would history make sense? Would the account of human deeds throughout the ages make sense? And the general answer which Kant gives is: This history does not make sense if we look at the individuals and their fates. There is nonsense because the greatest men are destroyed and the crooks - if they are clever enough - are amply rewarded. There is no sense in that and that is the reason why we need the immortality of the soul, i.e. a state in which there is harmony between happiness and worthiness to be happy. This we cannot expect from earthly life at any time.

But the fate of men in this life makes sense if we look not at the individuals, but at the human race, the human species.

Student: When you say, "looking at the human race," do you mean in all time?

Strauss: Yes. In all time.

Kant speaks first of the full determination of the phenomenon of the human will meaning as we have seen already from the other writings which we have considered, human actions as knowable and as observable are as fully determined as any other phenomenon. The example which he gives is that everyone is free to marry or not to marry. It is no moral obligation in this respect. But if we look at the statistical tables we see that the frequency of marriage is as much subject to laws as any other phenomena. Kant thinks, of course, of the early statisticians of the 18th century who have given this proof.

Yet these determined actions reveal an intention of nature, Kant says. Now this intention of nature cannot possibly lie on the phenomenal level alone because there determinism alone would be valid.

If we take a broad view; if we consider the play of the freedom of the human will as Kant puts it here, then we may observe a steady progress, though slowly developing original disposition of men. The individuals are unaware of that intention of nature. And even if they are aware of it, they are in most cases uninterested in it and, yet, nature, knowing better, brings it about. Nature uses rules, one could almost say anticipating Hegel's later phrase (but Hegel does not only speak of the rules of nature, but also of the rules of reason because the teleology of nature in the Kantian sense has in the meantime lost still more of its power than it had already).

In the beginning of the second paragraph, Kant says that this plan which nature follows in the course throughout the ages has something in common with what reasonable citizens of the world would do. They would act according to an agreed upon plan, but men as we are and as men always have been do not act on an agreed upon plan. Nature forces them to act according to her plan.

The second proposition. Teleological nature is concerned with the use of reason in the human race and not in the individuals. Regarding the individuals what happens makes no sense. I said that before. But with the human race it does make sense.

Here you see the difference between morality and what the philosophy of history does. In the case of history nature acts on the human race and not on the individuals qua individuals. What does the categorical imperative do? Whom does this address? Individuals.

At the end of the second thesis . . .

Reader: "This would destroy all practical principles, and Nature, whose wisdom must serve as the fundamental principle in judging all her other offspring, would thereby make man alone a contemptible plaything."

Strauss: "This would destroy all practical principles," which means, at the very least, this progress of the race brought about by nature over the heads of the individuals is nevertheless morally required. The denial of this progress of the race would destroy all practical principles. Morality requires this progress of the race.

Student: inaudible

Strauss: "All practical principles" means, of course, also morality too. Otherwise he would have said, "all hypothetical practical principles."

Just as the categorical imperative, morality, requires the immortality of the soul in an analogous way morality requires

historical progress. But the relationship between these two postulates - that is the problem which we have to solve. The mere fact that Kant does not mention that historical progress among the postulates of practical reason in the Critique of Practical Reason or in the Foundations shows that in some way this has a lower status in Kant's mind. Nevertheless, it is there and not without reason.

In the third thesis: "Nature has willed that man should, by himself, produce everything that goes beyond the mechanical ordering of his animal existence, and that he should partake of no other happiness or perfection than that which he himself, independently of instinct, has created by his own reason." Now we have seen this already from the Foundations. We don't have to go into that.

There is a difficulty here towards the end. The last paragraph.

Reader: It remains strange that the earlier generations appear to carry through their toilsome labor only for the sake of the later, to prepare for them a foundation on which the later generations could erect the higher edifice which was Nature's goal, and yet that only the latest of the generations . . ."

Strauss: "Only the latest." Go on.

Reader: " . . . should have the good fortune to inhabit the building on which a long line of their ancestors . . . should develop their capacities to perfection."

Strauss: So, in a way Kant vindicates providence or the wisdom of nature, but he cannot vindicate it entirely as appears from his passage. The many, many generations of men are sacrificed for the earthly happiness of the later or last generations. This difficulty remains. In other words, it is not very great confort for someone who falls victim to wars and so on if we tell him that it will be good for his great-great grandchildren.

Here Kant speaks about how nature proceeds in thinking about this happy ending. Man's anti-sociality. What Kant speaks about is Hobbes' war of everybody against everybody which he understands more profoundly than Hobbes did because Hobbes thought that it would be simply asocial. Kant sees that you cannot be anti-social without being in a more fundamental sense social. Being anti-social is only a modification of being a sociable being. But otherwise the thought is your Hobbian thought. Men have this anti-social egotistic desires, what Hobbes called pride. And this conflict forces men into entering civil society and therewith developing their reason. Otherwise, without those . . .

Reader: "In themselves unamiable characteristics of unsociability from whence opposition springs . . . by achieving their end, which is rational nature."

Strauss: In other words, this is all to the good, these vices. These private vices are public benefits as someone has said before Kant. Do you know who? (inaudible) And what he has

said regarding each present situation: the private vices are the public benefits, for example, luxury leads to the improvement of trade and also vanity. What would become of many industries without female and male vanity and so on. What says of each society at a given time, Kant says of the whole process. These private vices are the vehicle of the process. The historical process is very far from being a moral process it is morally good. That is the parallel.

Student: I'm wondering whether there is any problem in Kant's assertaion that nature wants man to have happiness only which he has created for himself with his own reason and yet identifying the main mechanism of progress as that which stems from his irrationality and which nature is doing for him.

Strauss: Take the sheep. Sheep like men. Sheep are good-natured. The wolf or other beasts of prey - I am speaking now of a human analogy - uses his wisdom more than a simple, lamb-like innocent. This Machiavellian thought is an ingredient of Kant's philosophy of history. Kant is in one way at the absolutely opposite pole from Machiavelli as everyone must have seen, but in his philosophy of history this kind of Machiavellianism which is so characteristic of modern thought enters. That is the only way in which you can ever achieve the perfect, rational society. Man's self-interest - to which Adam Smith appeals and Hobbes and Locke and Rousseau - that is the bane of progress.

Student: That is, nature wants man to benefit from that which he gets only through the misuse of his reason?

Strauss: Kant seems to think that the first uses of reason will be misuses. The good use of reason, i.e. the moral use will come later. But not necessarily. Man, as Kant says in other writings which we will read. . . . Traditionally it was said that perfect society required that men become angels. One could say that, in a way, Plato said it of his own republic. And Kant says, "No. The perfect society is possible as a society of devils provided that they are shrewd calculators. For example, just as many people today would say that we are not starry-eyed idealists. We are absolutely sober and practical political men and for this reason we are opposed to any war because of the danger of thermonuclear conflagration. Something of this kind is in Kant. The situation will become so that war and other abominations will no longer pay. And this fact alone - that it will no longer pay - is the guarantee for the establishment of a perfect social order.

Here there comes the crucial difference between Kant on the one hand and Hegel and Marx on the other. For Kant the difference between the morality and amorality - a nation of devils - is crucial. The laws of nature will make men act in accordance with the moral law, but for immoral reasons. That will not make them moral men. Therefore, Kant can speak of devils. And this change from behaving according to the moral law, but for devilish reasons, can in no way be guaranteed and predicted. That depends entirely upon the decision of the individual. Do you see the point? And, therefore, I think that that is the key reason why Kant's philosophy of history is of lesser weight

than his doctrine of the immortality of the soul. What can be brought about by nature is only a state according to morality, according to reason, but not a truly moral state.

What Hegel and Marx must try to do is to say: If you get the objective conditions in accordance with morality and reason, you get the moral change as a kind of inevitable by-product. Otherwise Kant would be superior to them as a philosopher of history.

One more point which I would like to mention. You remember perhaps from the Foundations the reference to the South Sea Islanders who do not develop their faculties. So they act against the moral law. They may be very amiable people, but they do not make that effort which they are required to do as moral beings. This would be an interesting question. These people are harmless, but yet wrong in a very important sense. They will never become worthy of happiness. Will they not become immortal? Because they don't deserve happiness after death. I mean they are not as bad as very wicked criminals, but they are not good men.

Student: inaudible

Strauss: That is a question which Kant, I believe, never discusses, but surely I should mention it. Next time we will conclude our discussion of this section.

Seminar on Kant

Session X, May 4, 1967

Mr. _____, you have been quite harsh on Kant. If we look at the situation today and the very common view, it is that Herder got a point which Kant did not see. For Herder a philosophy of history was possible as a theoretical pursuit. For Kant it was not possible. And, therefore, Herder actual capacity of empathy for other times and cultures surpasses that of Kant by far. This is what would be said today by everyone and, therefore, from the present day point of view one could say that from the beginning a case could be made for Herder.

But you did not bring out precisely what is it in Kant caused something like an antagonism, an antipathy to Herder. What was that? Very simply without engaging in a silly psychology or, for that matter, without going very deeply into the substance of the argument. How did he view Herder? As what kind of a man?

Student: A literary man.

Strauss: Yes, but not only that. That is true. He thought that there was an improper mixing of philosophy and poetry.

Student: He was supposedly a religious man, too.

Strauss: Yes. Supposedly, he was a Protestant clergyman. This is one point. Kant had somehow the feeling that here is someone who tries to smuggle in traditional religious ideas - greatly modified, of course. Herder was not exactly a Lutheran orthodox man. He was trying to smuggle these ideas into philosophy.

For example, you state that Kant disclaims philological knowledge. What does this mean in the context?

Student: Well, in that context it would be a disclaimer of a knowledge of Hebrew.

Strauss: Exactly. It is the Bible which is concerned. He says, "You know that much better than I. That is not my subject." In the same way in which Spinoza had been silent about the New Testament saying, " I do not know Greek."

One point. You spoke a few times about evolution. That is very misleading today. What does evolution mean here?

Student: I found that a great difficulty trying to decide what exactly Kant meant by evolution.

Strauss: He meant what everyone meant by evolution at that time and which Kant develops most clearly in a paragraph of "The Critique of Judgement." But this was a common view, not particular to Kant. Kant and Herder speak of the evolution of the individuals, not of species. This came up later and -

as far as I can remember - the first man to speak of the evolution of species out of other species was the French writer. This was done even before Herder, but this had no effect. The first lay teacher of evolution was Lamarck around 1800.

So the question simply was this: Is the development, say, of the human embryo, is this exactly like the seed of a plant, so that everything is already in the seed, only we can't see it. Or is there something added to it which - if we had sufficiently powerful microscopes - we could see? That is what is called epigenesis, something coming to, in addition. This was the issue at that time. But this only in passing.

Have you ever read Herder?

Student: No.

Strauss: I see. Then you are, of course, handicapped. But in spite of the fact that you know him only from Kant's exerpts, he attracted you more than Kant.

Student: Not unambiguously. Maybe I didn't express myself clearly. What I meant to say is that Kant refused to express sympathy for any of Herder's views in this context. But I tried to express doubt as to whether he would express such sympathy in other contexts.

Strauss: No. I think that this fundamental opposition remains throughout. Herder had attended classes of Kant; he was younger than Kant, and had spoken of him with high regard. Kant belongs to a different order simply than Herder does.

It might have been better if you had concentrated on what Kant does without trying to give us an account of Herder because the basis for that is too small. At any rate, I thank you for your paper which was quite satisfactory.

We have not yet finished the discussion which we began last time - the Idea of a Universal History in Cosmopolitan Intent. We discussed the fifth thesis and have now to discuss the sixth. Will you read that to us?

Reader: "The greatest problem for the human race to the solution of which nature drives man is the achievement of a universal civic society which . . .

Strauss: No. That is not correct. "Of a civil society which in a universal manner administers right."

Reader: " . . . of a civil society which administers right in a universal manner among men."

Strauss: I.e., without giving privileges to some. That would not be universal. The same law for everybody.

Nature forces man to the solution of this problem because of that anti-social sociality with which she has endowed him as we have seen before.

Reader: "The highest purpose of nature which is the development of all the capacities which can be achieved by mankind is attainable only in society."

Strauss: That I believe would be granted universally or at least generally. Man cannot attain his development except in society. But now Kant makes an important qualification, of course.

Reader: "Specifically, in the society with the greatest freedom. Such a society is one in which there is mutual opposition among the members."

Strauss: That is too weak for what Kant says. "Thorough" would be better - "a thorough, all-pervasive antagonism of its members."

Reader: " . . . total opposition among the members together with the most exact definition of freedom and fixing of its limits so that it may be consistent with the freedom of others. Nature demands that humankind should itself achieve this goal like all its other destined goals. Thus a society in which freedom under external laws . . ."

Strauss: "External laws" meaning laws enforceable as opposed to the internal law, the moral law.

Reader: " . . . external laws is associated in the highest degree with irresistable power. I.e., a perfectly just civic constitution is the highest problem nature assigns to the human race."

Strauss: Let us stop here for a moment. So the greatest freedom possible, hence an all-pervasive antagonism of its members. That means in itself the greatest license. People follow simply their inclination and this is taken for granted.

But now Kant brings in a limitation - a freedom to be as beastly as you please provided you grant the same freedom to everybody else. A simple example would be, of course, large parts of sex and morality to mention a case now frequently under discussion where people say frequently when the old-fashioned regulations are attacked, these people say of homosexuals, "They don't do any harm to anyone because both people agree with it." Therefore, only when other people who do not agree are harmed is it a matter for the legislator.

One can state this as follows in more general terms. There are two notions of freedom, the pre-modern view and the modern view and Kant, of course, has the modern view. According to the pre-modern view, license - doing as you please - has to be limited a principle coming from above. Let us call it a vertical principle. It may be God's law; it may be the natural end of man. That does not matter because it is vertical compared to what you are doing or intending now.

The classic, modern objection to this is this: Here you depend upon a limiting, restraining force of which you do not know

either because you cannot know the existence of God or even if you can you cannot know God's way of punishing or rewarding man, or because you do not know the end of man. With the rejection of teleology by modern, natural sciences this was settled.

The only thing to do is of something of which you know and on which you can depend. And that is the restraint which men exercise on one another. The others are as nasty as you are, but they are other people and somehow the more reasonable among them will see that restraint is the only thing which makes possible intelligent nations. This is the point which Kant makes here.

But Kant goes beyond that and beyond what his predessors like Hobbes, Locke etc. have said. He says, "This freedom under law - and the law is meant to be fundamentally a law restraining everyone equally. And the law is to be limited to that which can directly harm the others." Kant implies here that the greatest possible freedom compatible with the freedom of everybody else is the basis of the perfectly just constitution. The perfectly just constitution is that one which recognizes that greatest possible freedom made compatible with the same freedom of everybody else. This presupposes that that freedom is the sole ground of right if it is to be the perfectly just constitution.

Here Kant differs radically from his predecessors because this fundamental right of freedom is no longer based on the allegedly fundamental right of self-preservation. Therefore, certain difficulties arise. For instance, capital punishment and the duty to bear arms and expose oneself to violent death which are difficulties if one presupposes that you enter civil society in order to preserve your life. The person executed did not enter civil society with the notion that he would give civil society the right to execute him. The same applies also, of course, to war.

If preservation of life is no longer the basis, these difficulties are immediately disposed of. The basis is solely that freedom. Of course, that means also a divorce from any natural basis because this freedom is not - like self-preservation - something which man shares with the brutes.

Now let us turn to the next thesis.

Reader: "This problem is the most difficult and the last to be solved by mankind."

Strauss: Yes. And, again, Kant develops this in very powerful language. Man is a beast which needs a master, but the master will be himself a beast, being a human being. How can you find it? He says towards the end when he says, "from so crooked wood that from which man . . ."

Reader: "The task is therefore the hardest of all. Indeed its complete solution is impossible. For from such crooked wood

as man is made of nothing perfectly straight can be built."

Strauss: Let us go on. Only the approximation of this idea is imposed on us by nature. So the perfectly just society can never be established. We can only approximate it. Yes?

Reader: "That it is the last problem to be solved follows also from this: It requires that there be a correct conception of a possible constitution."

Strauss: No. " . . . a correct conception of the nature of a possible constitution." Yes?

Reader: " . . . great experience gained in many paths of life and, beyond these, a good will ready to accept such a constitution."

Strauss: Here Kant seems to presuppose that morality is presupposed for the greatest approximation to the just society, but this is not the view in his later publications as is shown by the passage on the angels to which I referred last time.

There is an interesting note here.

Reader: "The role of man is very artificial. How it may be with the dwellers of other planets and their nature, we do not know. If, however, we carry out well the mandate given us by nature we may perhaps flatter ourselves that we may claim among our neighbors in the cosmos no mean rank . . ."

Strauss: Very important in the space age if we need them.

Reader: "Maybe among them each individual can perfectly attain his destiny in his own life. Among us it is different. Only the race can hope to attain it."

Strauss: You see how important it is for Kant to limit his moral teaching to man and not to all rational beings as is indicated by this paragraph.

Now we come to a crucial proposition, seven.

Reader: "The problem of establishing a perfect civic constitution is dependent upon a lawful external relation among states and cannot be solved without a solution of that latter problem."

Strauss: What does this mean in simple terms?

Reader: No justice while there is war. A universal world state.

Straus: Call it United Nations or call it as Kant calls it a league of nations. Without the abolition of war, without the establishment of an authority above the individual states, you cannot have the good society.

Here the difference between Kant and the classics is, of course, quite striking because there is no notion in Plato and Aristotle

that you must have - excuse me, that you cannot have a good polity if the whole world is not covered with good polities which all form part of the universal league. The reason can be stated as follows: If Kant were right then there could not be a good individual in an imperfect state which Kant would deny. There can be one or more than one.

If it is possible to be a good man living in an imperfect society, why should there not be a good society living in an imperfect world? Be this as it may, Kant is one of the most powerful presenters - not in this, but in the Perpetual Peace - of the view that one must make this led from the order of peace within the individual states to a universal order of peace for the sake of justice.

Student: But the republic and the city to be founded in the laws were not going to be in very extensive foreign relations, but were to be as tucked away as possible.

Strauss: Yes, but still in the Laws it is perfectly clear - and in the Republic, too - that they have a warrior class. You don't have a warrior organ which is functionless.

The only example you could give is a statement of Aristotle in the Politics in Book VII or so where he says that there could be a perfect polity without any external relations, say on a far-away island. That is true. But Aristotle did not regard this as a likely or normal case.

The difficulty is indicated by Kant in the seventh thesis farther on.

Reader: "All wars are accordingly so many attempts not in the intention of man, but in the intention of nature to establish new relations among states and through the destruction or at least the dismemberment of all of those states to create new political bodies which, again, either internally or externally cannot maintain themselves and which must thus suffer light revolutions until finally through the best possible civil constitution and common agreement . . ."

Strauss: No. "Partly through the best possible arrangement of the civil constitution domestically."

Reader: ". . . partly through common agreement and legislation in external affairs, a state is created which - like a civic commonwealth - can maintain itself automatically."

Strauss: As an automaton. This is, of course, a point which the organic thinkers opposed in Kant and Hobbes - that they conceived of civil society as an automaton, i.e. without a life proper of its own.

From this quotation it is again clear that only a teleologic nature can be thought to bring about or to intend this kind of state of man.

Let us read the next paragraph.

Reader: "Would it be expected from an epicurean concourse of efficient causes that states like minute particles of matter in their chance contacts should form all sorts of unions which in their turn are destroyed by new impacts until once, finally, by chance a structure should arise which could maintain its existence? A fortunate accident which could hardly occur? Or are we not rather to suppose that nature here follows a lawful course in gradually lifting our wieght from the lower levels of animality to the highest level of humanity doing this by her own secret art and developing in accord with her law all the original gifts of man in this apparently chaotic disorder."

Strauss: That is fine. If we take the view of modern science which is what Kant calls here the epicurean view as we have seen in the Critique of Pure Reason, from this point of view there is no reason whatsoever to expect that there would be a tendency toward the just society. But if nature is teleological, then it would make sense.

Of course, Kant says, we cannot know that nature is teleological. But the assumption that nature is teleological follows from the moral law. So on an amoral basis - on a scientific basis - there is no reason to assume that the human situation would ever become different from what it was.

Let us turn to the beginning of the eighth thesis.

Reader: "The history of mankind can be seen."

Strauss: "Can". That is important. Kant does not say that it "must" be seen. It can be seen mainly on the basis of the moral law, but there is no theoretical necessity whatsoever. That is the difference between Kant on the one hand and Hegel and Marx on the other.

Now read the ninth thesis.

Reader: "A philosophical attempt to work out a universal history according to a natural plan directed towards achieving the civic union of the human race must be regarded as possible and, indeed, as contributing to this end of nature."

Strauss: Again. Without the natural teleology a universal history would be impossible from Kant's point of view.

The interesting question then is how Hegel's doctrine is in its way teleological, but the clearer case would be that of Marx and other thinkers who reject teleology and yet assume that there is a reasonable end to historical development and, therefore, in retrospect, at least, the historical process is a reasonable process.

There are some little points in the ninth thesis. There is a parenthesis after he has spoken of the Romans and the barbarians . . .

Reader: " . . . which will probably give law eventually . . ."

Strauss: What which? Our continent meaning Europe. Which probably will give laws to all others.

Does this contradict Kant's aspiration towards a universal league of nations?

What does the Communist Manifesto say about Europe? You must read the Communist Manifesto.

Student: It says that Europe will achieve Communism first if the conditions are right.

Strauss: Yes. In other words, the victory of Communism is the victory of Europe or British industry, French politics and German philosophy combined. Just as the Communist condition is the victory of the city over the countryside it is the victory of Europe over the under-developed continents. Of course, America would be counted as part of Europe if people like Kant and Marx - Kant could not have known sufficiently and Marx could . . . I think that Marx speaks of the West, the Occident, not of Europe in the Communist Manifesto. After all, Marx was a contributor to the Herald Tribune, wasn't he?

So a philosophy of history is a history of the human race viewed from a reasonable point of view, i.e. not viewed only as the ups and downs - the irrational ups and downs - of individuals and peoples, but as one process which as a whole is reasonable and rational. This, of course, is preserved by Hegel, but in Hegel it is a theoretical insight. For Kant it is ultimately a moral posture.

This much about this first piece. Now let us turn to Kant's review of Herder's ideas of thephilosophy of history of mankind.

It is interesting that Herder still in the title calls it Philosophy of the History of Mankind because the normal histories were, of course, histories of individual nations and not histories of mankind.

Let us observe a little bit of the way in which Kant goes about it. Read the second sentence.

Reader: "It can therefore be judged as little according to ordinary standards as many others from his prolific pen."

Strauss: It is possible that my edition of the German is defective. But there is nothing in my edition of the word "prolific."

Reader: It is as if his genius did not simply assemble ideas out of the wide range of arts and sciences in order to add them to other intelligible ideas, but as if he transformed them according to a certain law of assimilation to borrow his own expression peculiar to him in his particular manner of thinking. Thus they are markedly differentiated from those

through which other minds are nourished and thrive and thus become less capable of being communicated."

Strauss: Kant is very polite, I think. But he makes it as clear, as polite as he can, that Herder is not, as we would say today, a scientific or rational writer because he looks at it from his own point of view. Individualistic and, therefore, decisively not communicable. Of course one can read what Herder says, but it can never be proved because of the individuality of his point of view.

The common basis between Kant and Herder as has become clear from Mr. _____'s paper is that both argue on the basis of a natural teleology. That is common to them. Herer differs from that, and we will see later in what way.

The point which Herder makes and which is not quite acceptable to Kant is that man is the microcosm, a thought whose development appears fairly clearly from the quotations of Kant.

On page 31, beginning of the second paragraph.

Reader: "Upright posture and the rational use of his limbs were not allotted to man because he was destined to be a rational creature. On the contrary. He acquired reason as a result of his erect stature, as the natural affect of that stature which was necessary merely to make him walk upright."

Strauss: Let us stop here. That is the first almost explicit criticism of Herder which Kant makes. For Kant it would have made much more sense to start from man's rationality and to make this the key to man's upright posture, whereas Herder starts the other way around.

Whose side in this controversy would Aristotle take? The upright posture as the key to rationality or the rationality the key to the upright posture?

Student: (inaudible)

Strauss: Sure. So, in other words, the issue is a bit broader than Kant/Herder.

Now let us turn to page 33, the second paragraph.

Reader: "These principles are not analyzed because this is not the place for it"

Strauss: Let us read the preceding sentence - a quote from Herder. "All this makes for the immortality of the soul and not only for that, but also for the continuation . . ."

Reader: " . . . continuation of all active and animate forces of the creative world. Force cannot perish even though its organ may be disarranged. Whatever the omnipresent lifegiver summons to life lives; whatever acts, acts eternally in the eternal scheme."

Strauss: End of the quotation. Go on.

Reader: "These principles are not analyzed 'because this is not the place for it.'"

Strauss: Another criticism by Kant you see. This should be stated and articulated much more clearly and not merely asserted. Yes?

Reader: "However, 'in matter we observe so many spirit-like forces that complete contrast and opposition between these two essences - spirit and matter - though very distinct seems if not self-contradictory, at least completely undemonstrated.'"

Strauss: We see gradually what the quotations mean. The quotations are categorizations of Herder. It is not merely as, say, an ordinary reviewer who would give the reader an impression of what the book is about. Kant also categorizes the book by the very quotations.

On page 35 bottom. What Kant means by this is that these are all assertions of probability. These are not in any way true assertions.

Now on page 35 and in the Academy edition page 52.

Reader: "Still, 'man should not peer into his future situation, but just believe in it.'"

Strauss: He should not try to look into his future state, but believe into it, is what Herder says. What does Kant say to that?

Reader: "But how? If he once believes that he is able to look into it can he be restrained from seeking to make use of this ability now and then?"

Strauss: So, in other words, that is the old story which we know from the Foundation of the Metaphysics of Morals how only access to the ultimate mystery of life and human life is moral law. That is the only key we have and the attempt to try to look into these mysteries instead of living in obedience to the moral law will ruin us.

Reader: "This much is certain. In each of his powers lies an infinity. The forces of the universe, too, seem concealed in his soul, and only an organism or a series of them is required to allow it to pass over into actuality and exercise. Just as the flower stood forth and terminated the realm of subterranean still lifeless creation in an upright form . . ."

Strauss: I believe it was underlined by Kant, but I have not been able to check that.

Reader: " . . . so stands man erect in his turn."

Strauss: Again underlined. So the upright posture of man was first taken to be the key to his rationality and now we hear from the same Herder that the plants also have an upright posture and then we should also assume that they are rational. This is Kant's subtle joke. But, of course, the joke is not unmerited. There is this amazing thing that in a way the humans are between plants and animals because of the upright posture which we share with the plants. And, on the other hand, with the mobility which we share with our lower brethren, our dumb friends.

Now read the next paragraph.

Reader: "The idea and final purpose of Part I - I say one as there is a likelihood of several subsequent volumes of the work."

Strauss: No, not "a likelihood," rather "as it seems."

Reader: " . . . the idea of Part I consists in the following. The spiritual nature of the human soul, its permanence and progress towards perfection is to be proved by the analogy with the natural forms of matter particularly in their structure with no recourse to metaphysics."

Strauss: Yes. And this Kant regards as wholly preposterous. In other words, Herder is, in a way, a continuator of traditional metaphysics, but he is also opposed to it. And the principle of this intermediate position between traditional metaphysics and what he is aiming at is never made clear by Herder at least in this writing.

In the sequel Kant questions Herder's proof of the immortality of the individual. On page 37, the second paragraph.

Reader: "Hence there is not the least resemblance between the gradient progression in the very same man who is ever ascending to a more perfect structure in another life and the latter which one may conceive among completely different types and individuals in the realm of nature."

Strauss: That is, of course, crucial for Kant's criticism of Herder. Go on.

Reader: "Here Nature allows us to see nothing else than that it abandons individuals to complete destruction and only maintains the type."

Strauss: The species.

Reader: "But then we demand to know if the soul of man will also survive his destruction here on earth. This can be concluded perhaps on moral or, if you like, metaphysical grounds, but never by any kind of analogy to visible creation."

Strauss: Because there is no visible analogy for it. And a little bit later in the same paragraph . . .

Reader: "But what shall one think of this hypothesis of invisible forces acting on the organism and then how should we regard the design which aims to explain that which one does not comprehend by that which one comprehends even less?"

Strauss: That is a sound principle. Would you admit that? Go on.

Reader: "As to the former forces we can at least recognize the law by means of experience, although, of course, the causes themselves remain unknown."

Strauss: As we have often said, we know about gravitation and attraction, but we do not know its why.

Reader: "But of the latter even experience is denied us. What can the philosopher now invoke here to justify his allegations except simple despair of finding clarification in some kind of knowledge of nature and the necessity to seek it in the fertile field of the poetic imagination. But this is still metaphysics and, what is more, very dogmatic metaphysics even though our author renounces it as fashion demands."

Strauss: Now here he becomes harsher as he goes on. Metaphysics was quite unpopular in the second half of the 18th century. Voltaire. And Herder who had less to do with this rationalist movement than Kant, but in a way he follows it. That was at least Kant's impression.

In the next paragraph . . .

Reader: "But the unity of the organic force as self-constituting with regard to the manifold of all organic creatures and as subsequently acting upon organs according to their differences so as to establish their many genera and species, is an idea which lies wholly outside the sphere of empirical, natural science. This idea of organic force belongs solely to speculative philosophy."

Strauss: It belongs to the solely speculative philosophy. Purely speculative.

Reader: ". . . But, if it were to gain entry even there, it would cause great havoc among accepted conceptions. To want to determine what arrangement of the head externally with respect to its shape and internally with respect to its brain is necessarily connected with the propensity towards an upright posture. Still more, to want to determine how a simple organization directed solely to this end could contain the ability to reason . . ."

Strauss: "Could contain the ground of the rational faculty."

Reader: " . . . a pursuit, therefore, in which the beast participates. That patently exceeds all human reason. For reason thus conceived totters in the top rung of the physiological ladder and on the point of taking metaphysical weight."

Strauss: Here it is a bit more difficult. Granted that Kant is right when he says that we cannot deduce man's rationality from his upright posture. But if you have to start in the empirical science of man - anatomy, physiology and so on - from man's rationality as something irreducible could this not conceivably throw light on the particular character of his brain? of his hands? In this respect, I think, Kant goes much too far and away from Aristotle who would, of course, say that there is a connection between the fact that we have hands and not claws and our being rational.

So Kant, in his sympathy with modern mechanical science and his antipathy with anything to be called naturalism - he is for this reason opposed to Herder. Let us go on.

Reader: "Despite these remonstrances all credit ought not be denied this very thoughtful work. There is one remarkable thing about it . . ."

Strauss: This is really a fantastic criticism, but so quietly said that we do not notice it. Not <u>all</u> merit ought be denied to this so thoughtful work. Yes?

Reader: " . . . one remarkable thing about it not to mention here the reflections so eloquently expressed that they testify to noble and sincere thought. This is the courage with which its author knew how to overcome the suspicions of this profession with respect . . ."

Strauss: "Suspicion of <u>his</u> profession." "Of his estate" would be a more literal translation and that is a reference to Herder being a clergyman. In other words, Kant will say that although he is a clergyman with the peculiar dangers to which he is exposed. Actually all human estates are subject to dangers, I suppose. But Herder is unusually free from that. This is a point he thought worth mentioning. Yes?

And you see from the sequel that some clergymen - smaller clergymen not of the genius of Herder - had taken up the defense of Herder. Kant takes care of this in the sequel. We might perhaps have a look at that. On page 40.

Since Kant believes to know the materials for anthropology - anthropology here in the wide, 18th century sense where it means empirical knowledge of man. Kant himself has written such an anthropology and gave lecture courses on this subject regularly. So Kant knew his way here.

Reader: "As the reviewer believes, however, that he knows pretty well the materials involved in anthropology and also something of its methods in undertaking the history of humanity

in the whole scope of its destiny, he is convinced that it must be sought neither in metaphysics nor in the armory of specimens for a natural history by means of the comparison of the skeleton of man with that of other animal species. Least of all could such a comparison inform us of man's destination in another world."

Strauss: So Kant opposes Herder's concern with the body of man as the key to man's essence. And the strongest statement is, of course, that where Herder tries to deduce man's rationality from his upright posture and he says that least of all can we find out anything about the destiny of man in another world by this idea of his skeleton. This, I think, is a quite strong statement.

Later on, page 42, line 4 following.

Reader: "Moreover, the clergyman finds the merit we ascribe to the book For Freedom of Thought much too common for such a celebrated author. Undoubtedly, he means by that the external freedom which, because it depends upon time and place, is no merit at all."

Strauss: That is clear. Today there is no merit in saying everything you please in every language you please, however odd you please. In other times, say under a dictatorship, it is another story.

But Kant had in mind that inner freedom . . .

Reader: "which is unfettered by customary concepts and current modes of thought reinforced by public opinion, a freedom which is so utterly uncommon that even those who regard themselves as philosophers have only rarely been able to rise to it."

Strauss: Yes. Nothing could be truer.

Now we come to the second part. Let us turn to page 45, third paragraph, line 5 following. Here he speaks of the sixth and seventh books of Herder's ideas.

Reader: "It is not here our intention to pick out or analyze any of the numerous number of beautify passages rich in poetic eloquence which would recommend themselves to every reader of feeling, but - just briefly - we want to question . . ."

Strauss: No. "As little do we wish to examine" according to my German text.

Reader: " . . . whether the poetic spirit that enlivens the expression does not also sometimes intrude into the author's philosophy, whether synonyms are not valued as definitions here and there, allegories as truths?"

Strauss: And so on. Kant could not be more explicit now.

Now let us turn to page 46, line 12 from the bottom.

Reader: "We will not enquire whether the stream of his eloquence does not involve him occasionally in contradictions. For we are told that inventors must often leave more of the profit of their discovery to posterity than they themselves retain. Does this not exemplify the confirmation of the principle that the natural tendencies of man which apply to the use of his reason were intended to be completely developed only in the species but not in the individual? The author is inclined to consider this principle along with others deriving from it - although he did not quite grasp them correctly - as almost an offense to the majesty of nature which others prosaicly call blasphemy. All these details we must leave untouched mindful of the limits which are fixed for us."

Strauss: Yes. Now let us see. In the next paragraph at the beginning he speaks of a historical, critical mind who must study the history of mankind and Kant, of course, cannot do that.

Now page 48, the second paragraph where he begins to speak of the eighth book.

Reader: "A new line of thought begins in the eighth book which continues to the end of this section and contains the origins of the education of man who is conceived as a rational and moral creature. Consequently, the commencement of all culture. In the author's opinion this is not to be sought in the power peculiar to the human species, but completely outside it in an understanding of and instruction by, mother nature. As a result, all progress in culture would only be a projected communication and fortuitous proliferation of an original tradition. It is to this and not to himself that man would have to attribute all of his progress towards wisdom.

Since the reviewer if he sets foot outside of nature and the path that reason offers to knowledge feels quite helpless, and since he is altogether inexperienced in scholarly philology and the knowledge of critical examination of ancient documents, he is completely incompetent to make philosophic use of the facts that are related and verified in that branch of knowledge, thus he conceeds that he could hold no opinion of this point."

Strauss: In the earlier writings he had said something about the principles of historical criticism regarding historical documents. Do you remember that? Who read that paper? What does Kant say there about the right procedure regarding the evaluation of ancient texts? Does he not quote Hume there?

Student: Yes. In the footnote.

Strauss: Yes, well the footnotes are also part of the work if written by the author.

Student: He says that according to Hume the first page of Thucydides was the beginning of real history and I suppose that he thus eliminates Herodotus.

Strauss: Herodotus is very uninteresting to Kant.

Student: It is only with the Greeks that history begins and he even has the suggestion that the Jewish history begins with the Septuagint when the Greek king ordered the Bible translated.

Strauss: In other words, Genesis is not a history; it is myth as they say today. That is what he means. In a polite way he here suggests that the poor reviewer cannot make these assertions to which Herder feels entitled.

Now a bit later where you left off.

Reader: "Frankly, on the basis of his own personal opinion this didactic history of Moses relates that the first created men participated in the teaching of Elohim . . ."

Strauss: "Elohim" is the Hebrew word for God, but Herder uses it here - what is grammatically possible - as a plural. I.e., if you would want to translate it you would have to say, "the Gods."

We don't have to read the rest. In other words, what Kant here suggests is this: You, our find philologian, you refer to our most ancient document and to the original tradition of mankind available in the Bible, and you bring in all sorts of things incompatible with theology.

I never read , the famous writer in our age in France and also available in English, but from what i have read in some reviews I have the impression that there is something in common with Herder. is no longer alive, but he was perfectly informed about the state of the popular evolution and also of the history of mankind so he has the necessary competence, but then he connects this with a theology, a theological eschatology. Apparently, the disproportion between the part which is at least today generally recognized if not truly demonstrated, and the other part which is in no way generally recognized is so striking.

And then Herder takes issue with the sentence in Kant which you read: "Man is a beast which needs a master." Herder says that this is a wicked, evil proposition. Kant very modestly tries to explain what he means and to show that it is not a wicked proposition. This proposition, therefore, is not as wicked as Herder means. " - it is possible that a wicked man has said it. -" So Kant doesn't claim too much goodness for himself.

We have to read this, of course, because it is one of the few documents of Kant's philosophy of history, but it is much less revealing, as you must have seen, than the writing which Kant composed a year earlier which we discussed last time. Yes?

Student: With regard to what you said at the beginning of the class about the evolution of the species, it seems to me that there was a great issue between Kant and Herder regarding the evolution of the species. Kant was arguing that Herder seems to suggest that man is, indeed evolved from these other species. In the footnote it says . . .

Strauss: The footnote by Kant or by the editor?

Student: No. It is a point where Kant said about Herder that his theory could have only one of two consequences one of which is that man is evolved. . .

Strauss: Let me say one thing. This ladder of which Kant speaks, that does not necessarily mean evolution. As late as Hegel in his Encyclopedia of the Philosophic Sciences when he speaks of this order, this ascending ladder of beings, this must not be understood in the sense of what we now call evolution. Because Herder wrote already after Lamarck. This is a different story.

But the fact that he admits a ladder does not mean that he accepts the notion of an evolution from one species to another.

Student: He says on page 38. . .

Reader: "There is only one relationship among them but this would be to ideas so monstrous that reason recoils from them. Either one species would have emerged out of the other or out of one single original species or all would have perhaps emerged out of the single primordial wound."

Strauss: But this would only mean that Kant rejects a priori evolution in the Lamarck-Darwinian sense and he does not prove at all that Herder had asserted it. He says that it would lead to it.

Reader: There is this footnote by Beck which claims that Kant misquotes Herder and that his later case rests partially on this.

Strauss: I have not investigated this, but he surely doesn't assert that either Kant or Herder spoke about evolution in the Lamarck-Darwinian sense. I would have to look up the original Herder, but as far as I know there is nothing like this in Herder.

We have one famous and well-known discussion of how they thought about this matter. There is, of course, first the doctrine of creation in the Bible according to which each species is created as fundamentally unchangeable by God. This was one famous view.

The alternative was the epicurean doctrine which we know especially from Lucretius and which was prepared by Democritus and other thinkers. Here we have indeed a non-creation of

the species. All species emerged at the same time in the formative period of the earth when everything was still fluid so to speak.

And the characteristic point of the evolutionist's doctrine is the emergence of the species out of the species. As far as I know - and I am not a specialist in that field - the first man who proposed such a thing was Diderot.

So what you had at all times and especially in the 18th century - the century of reform - was an arrangement of the species in an ascending order. But this did not mean an emergence of the higher out of the lower. The question became - I do not know whether some people have thought of it before. I have never read the history of the idea of evolution in our sense. I know only this classic text of Lucretius summarizing the ancient thought on the subject.

The problem didn't arise, of course, for Aristotle because of the eternity of the species. There was an eternity of the world and, therefore, an eternity of the species. Only the people who denied the eternity of the world could begin to think of the origin of the species.

But if you think of Darwin's book title, <u>The Origin of the Species</u>, and translate it into Greek _____. How funny this sounds. That the ideas, the forms, the classes as such should have come into being. That individuals come into being, that was a matter of daily experience.

Seminar on Kant

Session XI, May 9, 1967

It was wise of you to consider Rousseau himself with whom Kant takes issue here as we have seen. But you missed something which is immediately more important. This thesis called conjectural history of the origin of mankind or the conjectural origin of mankind. You give the reason explicitly given by Kant as to why it must be conjectural. An account of the origin of man as man must be the account of the origin of morality. And morality cannot emerge out of non-morality. That is the difficulty.

But there is another reason why Kant calls his account conjectural. What is the immediate basis of that conjectural account?

Student: He says in the first part that it is impossible without knowledge of the history - without records - to have anything but conjectures.

Strauss: Yes, but does he not have a record which he follows?

Student: The Scripture.

Strauss: You didn't say a word about that.

Last time we considered Kant's critique of Herder and Herder had made a great use of the oldest document of history by which he meant the Bible. This is, in a way, Kant's reply to Herder. You use the Bible as an authoritative text although you are no longer entitled to do so since you are no longer an orthodox Lutheran. But the Bible cannot be an authoritative text for the first page of history is where?

Student: Thucydides.

Strauss: Right. He quotes Hume. So, in other words, the account which follows the Biblical account is bound to be conjectural given the non-authoritative and non-historical charact[illegible] the Bible. Number 1.

Number 2. Kant interprets the Biblical account regardless of whether it stems from the 10th century or the 4th century in a way wholly different from the clear meaning of the text. That there was a fall of Adam and Eve is hardly mentioned. What is according to the traditional view the fall is according to Kant a great progess, a blessing to mention only one among many other things.

This side of the Kantian argument you disregarded and I think that it is very important. You brought out quite rightly the things which have to do with the center of Kant's teaching, but it is not unimportant to consider - especially with a

view to the fact that Kant wrote a couple of years later this writing on Religion Within the Limits of -ure Reason - to see what liberties he takes with the Biblical text when trying to find a reason within it. He changes the meaning completely.

Of course, according to the traditional view such a phenomenon like war and other evils are a consequence of the fall. They are evils, but the root of these evils is not a defect of the creator, but due to man's original sin. This one must keep in mind in order to understand Kant's thesis. Wars and other evils are boons compared with the conditions of South Sea islanders - the state of paradise - that would be exactly what Kant does not want to have. A merely happy human race without the development of its faculties. Now, of course, the Bible doesn't imply that at first men did not have developed faculties. The traditional view is that Adam was perfect. But Kant does not accept that in the first place. The development of the faculties requires evil as an incentive to a higher state.

I think that I will leave it at these remarks about you paper in general. Thank you again.

Miss _____, I read your paper and it was quite satisfactory. I would like to add only one point.

Kant's position in his critique of Herder, as I said last time, is somehow between Aristotle and Herder. Aristotle would say that it is possible and necessary to understand the more man's physique by starting from his rationality than Kant would grant.

In this connection, I would like to draw your attention to a present-day biologist. Some of you may have read him. Hortman, a Swiss biologist. At least one of his works has been translated into English. His approach to the whole problem of man - the biological problem - (and he probably wouldn't admit this) is Aristotelian in spirit. It is a rare case and goes much further than Kant would grant in elucidating bodily phenomena by man's rationality, by man's peculiarity.

Now let us turn to this writing. I think that it is now necessary to remind ourselves of the broad context even if this will take ten minutes or so.

These essays with which we are concerned here are devoted to a philosophy of history. Philosophy of history in this original version - 18th century version and even beyond that - tries to argue this question: Does the fate of man throughout the ages have a meaning? Does it point to a single goal? Is the history of mankind eschatological?

Kant does not speak of eschatology. He speaks of milleniumism.

The formulation of the history of mankind as eschatological points to the fact that philosophy of history - in this early

form - is a modification of the Biblical view which means that it does not originate in philosophy.

Let me repeat again that the philosophy of history is a relatively recent thing. It stems from the 18th century and it was prepared by something which, in itself, has no relation to philosophy of history. Namely, the great project of the 17th century. You find it in the writings of Bacon and Descartes. According to that view, particularly striking in Descartes' Discourse on Method, man - not nature or God - sets for himself an end to be achieved in a long process, in a long progress.

In the age of Descartes, this end - making man the master and owner of nature - is not the end of preceding history, of the history preceding the progress. There is no question about that. This end is discovered as a sensible end by Bacon and Descartes and they think that if people listen to him from now on there will be a stead progress towards the end. That is not the end of nature which is always effective.

Philosophy of history means, however, an end which was effected from the very beginning and which does not originate in man's positing.

Kant, in contradistinction to these earlier thinkers, says that the end is nature's end.

Hegel says that it is reason's end, but the reason of which Hegel speaks is not simply the reason of man, it is a reason with a capital "R." Therefore, it was effective from the very beginning when men were wholly unable to use their reason in a proper way.

The predicament of Kant's philosophy of history is that this philosophy of history is an important concern of Kant, but it does not belong to the core of his teaching. This is a question with which we are particularly concerned. Why is this the case? One must understand first Kant's central teaching, especially his moral teaching before we can find an answer to that question.

At the beginning of the course I referred to Kant's statement about what he owes to Rousseau, a much earlier utterance than the one which Mr. _____ read to us today. What he learned from Rousseau was to question the supremacy of theoretical philosophy or theoretical science. What he learned from Rousseau was to see the supremacy of practical reason, moral reason.

Practical reason which for Kant is the same as the will, is concerned with the rights of mankind according to its early formulation about 1762.

The word "rights" is characteristic. "Rights" means not the duties. This shows that Kant is an heir to modern political philosophy as represented by Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau who

all start from the fundamental rights of man and regard the duties derivative from that right. In Kant that is much more complicated, but nevertheless we will see that it ran through.

Surely Kant makes a radical change within modern political philosophy, but it is nevertheless a radical change within modern political philosophy; it is not a break from it.

Let us remember a few points which we have made in the course of our studies. The first point which Kant makes is that he questions happiness as the end. Happiness, we may say using the present terminology, is radically subjective and, therefore, cannot be made the principle as it was in Aristotle in particular.

Kant's predecessors, the men I mentioned, had some awareness of this difficulty and, therefore, one can say that they replaced the subjective happiness which differs from individual to individual and within the individual from time to time by the objective conditions of happiness - let us say, life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness - the things which you need regardless of what you understand by happiness.

Kant does something corresponding, not identical. Kant says that the conditions of happiness derive their validity from happiness. We are not interested in the conditions of happiness for their own sake. Therefore, these conditions of happiness can only be hypothetical imperatives.

Morality, on the other hand, expresses itself in the categoric imperative and therefore does not, as such, have anything to do with happiness. Morality can be said to be concerned with the worthiness of happiness, but not with happiness as such. That is the first point.

The second point. In the teachings of Kant's predecessors the basis was the fundamental right of self-preservation from which every other moral fact has to be derived.

Kant, as we have seen, makes freedom the basic right and, therefore, abandons self-preservation as the fundamental phenomenon. In this very important change from self-preservation to freedom again a fundamental point made by the modern philosophers remains. I spoke about it last time, but I believe that I have not been clear enough.

I distinguish two ways of limiting license in order to understand what freedom means. I distinguish a horizontal and a vertical limitation. The vertical limitation would be from God or from man's natural end or from anything comparable if there is an alternative.

The horizontal limitation, on the other hand, is the one which comes from other human beings, the idea being that whether there is a natural end is doubtful, whether God is

concerned with our actions and punishes them or rewards them we do not know. We may believe it, but we do not know. But this we do know: if you step on men's toes they will react to that and will step on your toes. This is effective whereas the vertical limitation is not effective. This peculiar "realism" so characteristic of modern thought since Machiavelli is underlying this point. Men can be known and, hence, be depended upon to limit license which you cannot say of nature and of God according to this view.

There is one more point I would like to mention. As to the question of the philosophy of history in Kant we have seen from Kant's statements on morality that the categoric imperative leads to the postulates of God - leads to, does not presuppose. It leads to the postulates of God and the immortality of the soul because morality means worthiness of being happy and this worthiness hangs in the air if there is not a God and an afterlife.

In this sphere no human being is ever sacrificed to the happiness of anybody else. Everyone will get what he deserves. That is not known, but it is a matter of rational belief according to Kant. This is why the immortality of the soul is a postulate of practical reason whereas the philosophy of history is not in the same way a postulate of practical reason.

Where does the philosophy of history come in? The moral law commands us to act in a certain manner as you know. But to act means to act in this life. Therefore, we cannot help being concerned with the this-worldly outcome of our actions, although the outcome is not the primary consideration. The primary consideration is the intrinsic goodness of the action. You cannot help - precisely if you are a moral man - to be concerned whether you contribute by your actions to the betterment of the human situation. You cannot help being concerned with the future of mankind.

A symbolic or, as Kant says, a typical formulation of the categoric imperative speaks of nature and natural laws in the theological sense, that nature has destined man to such and such an end. This teleological nature which does not belong to the categoric imperative as it is strictly understood, but to its symbolization, offers the key to the history of mankind. The history of mankind becomes reasonable if we look at it from the point of view of an intention of nature. And that is what Kant tries to do in his philosophy of history.

We know already the end in Kant's sense - the universal state, i.e., the league of nations. A league of nations if we try to speak politically would include also Red China, the Federal Republic of Germany, Eastern Germany but, according to some, not Nationalist China although one doesn't see why Nationalist China should be excluded when these other states are not. But this only in passing. The universal state is,

according to Kant, the precondition of the just order in any particular society. That we have seen.

What I did not say, and what I should say is this: This crucial point - the universal order - is a precondition of a just order within any particular society. This is one of the many things which are preserved in Marxism because, according to the strict Marxist doctrine, modified for practical purposes by Stalin, you cannot have socialism in just one country.

Now let us turn to the Kantian writings. I Kant had referred on page 45 in your edition and also on page 49 to Herder's views on the Bible in a book called The Oldest Document of the Human Race meaning, thereby, the beginning of the Bible. This is exactly the subject of Kant. Kant gives a radically different interpretation of the oldest document meaning the first few chapters of Genesis.

He opens the essay with a remark that we can only make conjectures about the beginning of history. I think that that is still true. We come back to certain tools, on the one hand, found in graves and other places. And then we find earlier skeletons. Whether these men of the pre-human age had already language cannot be known. The gap between the so-called anatomical findings and the cultural findings can never be bridged. Kant did not think of it in these terms, of course, but the main point is that the beginnings of mankind will always remain hypothetical. We will never find eye-witnesses. And what we can find is in need of interpretation.

So only conjectures about the beginnings of history are possible and even these conjectures are possible only under certain conditions. What are these conditions? That is interesting. He wants to know about the beginnings as made by nature by which he excludes a theological account proper. And the next point - in the first paragraph. . .

Reader: "One need not resort to fiction but can rely on experience if only one presupposes that human actions were in the first beginning no better and no worse than we find them now."

Strauss: Do you see the great implications there? "In the first beginning human actions were no better nor worse than now." A denial of the fall. Once you introduce the fall, once you introduce the view that man was created perfectly you go beyond the limits set to reason. In other words, no miracles.

Kant makes clear then in the next paragraph that what he does is under no circumstances something serious. The unseriousness has two levels. On the more interesting level is this: That Kant engages here in something which is not his business - Biblical exegesis. He is the first to admit that it is not his business as we have seen in his writing regarding Herder.

On page 54, the second paragraph.

Reader: "Unless one is to indulge in irresponsible conjectures . . ."

Strauss: "Irresponsible" is not in the German. I was quite surprise because the word "irresponsible" or the word "responsible" in the meaning now used is, I think, a much later coinage. In the present-day meaning of the term a "responsible" man is what formerly would have been called a conscientious man or a virtuous man. It is interesting to conjecture why we have come to avoid using words like "conscientious" and "virtuous" and have a much less fancy word - responsible.

Reader: " . . . one must start out with something which human reason cannot derive from prior natural causes, in the present case the existence of man."

Strauss: The existence of man cannot be explained. This alone might show - although it is not entirely conclusive - that Kant does not think of an evolutionary theory. You remember that we discussed that last time when we found the term "evolution" occurring and when I mentioned that it does not necessarily mean the evolution of the species, but only an evolution of the individuals.

Kant makes clear in the sequel in the same paragraph that he will discuss Genesis, Chapter 2 to 6. I.e., he skips completely the first chapter.

Reader: "I put this pair into a place secure against the attack of wild beasts, a place richly endowed by nature with all means of nourishment and placed with a perpetually mild climate. Hence, a garden, as it were . . ."

Strauss: "As it were." You see, the literal understanding of the word "garden" is out.

Reader: "What is still more, I begin with this pair not in the natural state with all its crudeness, but rather after it has already taken mighty steps in the skillful use of its powers for, if I were to attempt to fill this gap which presumably encompasses a great space of time, there might be for the reader too many conjectures and too few probabilities.

The first man, then, was able to stand and walk. He could speak and even discourse, i.e. speak according to coherent concepts and, hence, think. These are all skills which he had to acquire for himself for if he were created with them he would also pass them on through heredity, but this contradicts experience. But I take him as already in possession of these skills for my sole purpose is to consider the development of manners and morals in his way of life, and these already presuppose the skills referred to."

Strauss: Man had to acquire these skills. They could not have been given to him as they seem to be according to the Bible.

In other words, there are no natural potentialities proper which would have to be actualized. Man was not created with such potentialities; he acquired the skills. This is, of course, all a tacit criticism of the Bible.

Man's morality, we see here, necessarily presupposes his being actually reasoning. The unconditioned moral law of which we have heard is not in every respect unconditional. You must be a rational being in the first place, otherwise you cannot hear it.

In the note which you find at the bottom of this page Kant makes a characteristic dig at pious people. He speaks here of the urge to communicate oneself and then he says, "a similar effect of this urge. . ."

Reader: "may be observed even now. Children and thoughtless persons are apt to disturb the thinking part of the community by rattling, shouting, whistling, singing and other kinds of noisy entertainment often also by religious devotions"

Strauss: This is typical 18th century.

In the following paragraph Kant interprets the prohibition of eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. According to Kant that simply means man's instinctual aversion to unwholesom food. That suffices as an example.

Similarly, he interprets the serpent in a non-Biblical way. The serpent is simply reason, if a rather undeveloped reason, but better than the mere instinct which forbade the eating of the tree of knowledge, that pre-existed the reason.

I think that for our purposes it is enough to read Kant's account of the result of the fall. That is on page 56, line 15 from bottom.

Reader: "But, however insignificant the damage done it sufficed to open man's eyes. He discovered in himself a power of choosing for himself a way of life of not being bound without alternative to a single way . . ."

Strauss: Formerly he was bound, prevented by his instinct from eating of that particular tree. Now he can eat of any tree and, therefore, he has a great latitude, but at the same time also the embarrassment of choice and therefore he must use his reason.

Reader: "Perhaps the discovery of this advantage created a moment of delight, but of necessity anxiety and alarm as to how he was to deal with this newly discovered power quickly followed. For man was a being who did not yet know either the secret properties or the remote effects of anything. He stood, as it were, on the brink of an abyss.

Strauss: That is freedom. If you are free then you stand at the brink of an abyss. This has now become a very common subject, but the connection with Kant is by no means accidental.

Reader: "Until that moment instinct had directed him towards specific objects of desire, but from these there now opened up an infinity of such objects and he did not yet know how to choose between them. On the other hand, it was impossible for him to return to his state of servitude, i.e., subjection to instincts from this state of freedom once he had tasted the latter."

Strauss: This refers to the Biblical account of the expulsion from Paradise. The meaning is obviously completely changed. Now this would be an interesting story, the account of the interpretations of the fall in the 17th and 18th century. They are by people who were not orthodox but for one reason or another felt it necessary to present their views in the guise of Biblical exegesis. One beautiful and well-known example is that of Milton in Paradise Lost. You see, it wasn't so bad after all.

On page 58, the first paragraph.

Reader: "Man, compelled to support himself, his wife and his future children foresaw the ever-increasing hardships of labor. Woman foresaw the troubles to which nature has subjected her sex and those additional ones to which man, a being stronger than she, would subject her. Both foresaw with fear in the background of the picture that the end of a troublesome life that which to be sure inexorably strikes all animals without, however, causing them care, namely death. And, they apparently foreswore and decried as a crime the use of reason which had been the cause of all these ills."

Strauss: This is Kant's very indirect reference to the prohibition against eating of the tree of knowledge. This criticism of reason was made by very inexperienced human beings on the basis of their very limited knowledge. It amounts to that, doesn't it?

Page 58 in the same paragraph.

Reader: "And from then on he looked upon them - the other beasts - no longer as fellow creatures but as mere means and tools to whatever ends he pleased. This idea entails, obscurely, to be sure, the idea of contrast, that what he may say to an animal he may not say to a fellow-human, that he must rather consider the latter as an equal participant in the gifts of nature. This idea was the first preparation of all those restraints in his relations with his fellow man which reason would in due course . . ."

Strauss: "in the future"

Reader: " . . . would in the future impose on man's will, restraints which are far more essential for the establishment

of a civil society than inclination and love."

Strauss: This is also very characteristic and anti-Biblical. Now you see, of course, Kant's complete disregard of the image of God notion of the Bible. He has a kind of justification because he does not deal with chapter 1 in which this was set forth most clearly.

It is clear when he writes, "reason will impose it in the future" that the moral law was not known in the beginning of mankind and could not be known. This theme of 17th and 18th century revolutionary thinkers - men like Rousseau and Locke included. According to the traditional natural law view the natural law is valid only if it is properly promulgated to man. The traditional view was that it is properly promulgated to man by the very fact that man is a rational being. This is questioned by people like Locke, by Locke in particularly clear form in the Essay Concerning Human Understanding where, on the basis of accounts by travelers, he tries to show - for that matter, not only travelers but also accounts of what armies do when sacking a town and says, "Where do you find here an effectiveness of the conscience? of the inborn knowledge of good?"

Isn't this another inducement for a philosophy of history? How can we reasonably explain that the natural law, as Kant calls it "the law of reason", could not be known properly until now? Now may be 1688 when Locke wrote, it may be 1782 when Kant wrote and so on. This is one not unimportant function of a philosophy of history.

This leads to another question returning to Kant's formulation in particular. Can early men ever have become worthy of happiness since they could not become moral in any serious sense and, hence, could they ever be expected to partake of life after death? That is a necessary question.

Now let us turn to page 59, the second paragraph.

Reader: "And so man had entered into a relation of equality with all rational beings whatever their rank with respect to the claim of being an end in himself respected as such by everyone. A being which no one might treat as a mere means to ulterior ends. So far as natural gifts are concerned, other beings may surpass man beyond all comparison. Nevertheless, man is without qualification equal even to higher beings in that none has the right to use him according to pleasure."

Strauss: This is Kant's interpretation of the verse of Chapter 3 verse 22 which reads, "And the Lord God said, 'Behold man is one of us. He knows good and evil." That is Kant's interpretation of that. Man had reached equality with all rational beings. What was a consequence of his sin, according to the Bible, is according to Kant the consequence of his inevitable and rational liberation from the tutelage of nature. Man is equal with God, with all rational beings regarding the

claim to be an end in himself, to be recognized as such by God and any other rational beings.

Remember the categoric imperative as it was formulated in The Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals: act so that you use humanity both in your person and in the person of every other man always also as an end and never merely as a means. This is presented there, of course, as a duty. We learn from this present work that in doing so the categoric imperative gives man a lawful claim, that is to say aright. That becomes then a moot question: What is more important or the key to the whole proposition, the duty aspect or the right aspect of Kant's moral philosophy?

At first glance, everybody will say rightly that Kant is the philosophy of duty, but the same Kant in one of his writings raises for the first time this question: How come that moral philosophy is called the 'doctrine of duties' and not the 'doctrine of rights'? For Kant this is already a question. Why should there not be at least an equal emphasis on the rights? That is, I think, very revealing.

This change of emphasis from duties to rights is one of the most important facts in the history of morality. You hear again of the New Morality rebelling against the old. This has, of course, repeated itself in almost every generation. If the big revolution was in the 17th century where this happened for the first time, one of the most characteristic features is the shift of emphasis from duties to rights. It is very easy to say and in a sense it is correct, that there are no duties without rights and no rights without duties. The latter is less clear. On can speak of the rights of God without admitting any duties of God for example.

At any rate, one of the many illustrations is one which I believe that I never mentioned in my publications. In Descartes' Passions of the Soul, his main moral work if we disregard his Letters to Queen Elizabeth, there he presents in the context of the virtue of generosity his moral principle and the only term of this kind which occurs there is the word "right." I do no believe that there is a single mention of duty in this work. This only in passing.

Let us turn to the end of this whole section.

Reader: "In the future the wretchedness of his condition would often arouse in him the wish for a paradise, the creation of his imagination."

Strauss: That is Kant's last word on the original sin of man in the Biblical account.

Reader: " . . . that creation where he could dream or while away his existence in quiet inactivity and permanent peace. But between him and that imagined place of bliss restless reason would interpose itself irresistably telling him to develop the faculties implanted within him. It would not

permit him to return to that crude and simple state from which it had taken him to begin with. It would make him take up patiently the toils which he yet hates and pursue the (inaudible) which he despises. It would make him forget even death itself which he dreads because of all those trite things which he is even more afraid to lose."

Strauss: His reason of man is a very silly thing. It is misused reason, but it is nevertheless reason. The original condition would have been instinctual. There was no Paradise at the beginning but only crudeness. Reason, in spite of its irrationality, is a net gain. Why? Because the irrational use of reason leads ultimately to an ever-greater approximation to the perfectly rational or just society.

Let us look at page 60, the second paragraph.

Reader: "While for the species the direction of this road may be from worse to better, this is not true for the individual. Before reason awoke there was as yet neither commandment nor prohibition and hence, also, no violation of either."

Strauss: Kant couldn't have stated more clearly that in human history there was a pre-moral stage and, therefore, a stage of humans who could never have become worthy of happiness.

Reader: "But when reason began to set about its business it became in all its pristine weakness into conflict with animality with all its power. Inevitably evil sprang up and, which is worse, along with the cultivation of reason also vices such as had been wholly alien to the state of ignorance and innocence."

Strauss: The emergence of the evils was necessary. The progress of the species, Kant says here, is not a progress for the individuals. For the individuals, they were more miserable after they had become rational beings.

This reminds me of a statement of Rousseau in his letters to the Archbishop of Paris which he wrote after his Emile and Social Contract had been condemned by the Archbishop. It had also been condemned by the authorities in Geneva. There he says that the development of enlightenment and vice always takes place in the same proportion. That is to say, the more rational or enlightened men become, the more vicious they become. Not in the individuals, but in the peoples. This is a distinction which I have always carefully made and which none of those who have attacked me has ever been able to understand. That is a very forceful statement, disregarded by all interpreters of Rousseau who I know. What does Rousseau mean by this?

I will formulate it now in Kantian terms not speaking of the individuals and peoples by whom Rousseau means outstanding

individuals and people in the mass, but the Kantian distinction between individuals and the species. Progress towards reason and the progress of reason is bad for the species but good for the individuals. Kant, however, says that progress is good for the species, but bad for the individuals for it brings great suffering which, however, redound to the benefit of the species.

You must recognize in this thought famous features of Marxism. All this misery including the abominations of capitalism are better than the South Sea islanders and their happiness which would lead nowhere.

Both Rousseau and Kant presuppose that nature is good, but that it takes care only of the species, not of the individuals. Or, if you want to speak of Providence, there is only general Providence, not particular Providence. Yet, according to Rousseau, the development of civilization is against nature. According to Kant, that development is in accordance with the intents of nature. Because this is the case, because according to Rousseau the development of civilization is against nature, there is no philosophy of history, strictly speaking, in Rousseau meaning that there is no meaningful history.

There is, however, such a philosophy of history in Kant because the development of civilization corresponds to the intent of nature. This statement needs some qualifications, but it is sufficient at this time.

You see also here, again, that Kant asserts the necessity of vice for human progress which is an important modification of 's point, private vice, public benefit. And, of course, one must think of Hegel and Marx.

Aristotle is here the beautiful counterpart to these modern thinkers. According to Aristotle the development of the city and everything possible owing to the city is a natural process which means a process without the necessary interference or intervention of vice and crime. Aristotle was not a babe of the woods, so he knew as well as Hobbes and other people that the foundations of kingdoms are frequently based in crime, but Aristotle says that there is no essential necessity for that. For the modern thinker there is an essential necessity. That is the difference.

Start reading again where you left off.

Reader: "Morally, the first step from this latter stage of innocence was therefore a fault."

Strauss: "A fault." He doesn't speak of "the" fault, but of a fault.

Reader: "Physically it was a punishment for a whole host of formerly unknown ills were a consequence of this fall. The history of nature, therefore, begins with good for it is the work of God while the history of freedom begins with

wickedness for it is the work of man. For the individual who, in the use of his freedom, is concerned only with himself, this whole change was a loss. For nature, whose purpose with man concerns the species, it was a gain.

"Hence the individual must consider as his own fault, not only every act of wickedness which he commits, but also all the evils which he suffers. And, yet, at the same time insofar as he is the member of the whole - the species - he must admire and praise the wisdom of the whole arrangement."

Strauss: You remember also Marx's phrase of man as a "species-being." In other words, the fundamental collectivism.

Here the morally bad is integrated. That is the function of a philosophy of history. The morally bad is integrated into the intention of nature and, then, it looks quite different, doesn't it? So the philosophy of history is, in a way, trans-moral, although it has a moral foundation as we shall see from the other writings.

Hence, if the moral point of view is the highest, which it is according to Kant's strict moral teaching, then the status of the philosophy of history is problematical. That is one reason why it is relegated to outside the gate and doesn't enter the sanctuary completely of Kant's teaching.

The sequel is very interesting, but too long to read. Here Kant discusses Rousseau explicitly, namely the well-known contradiction in his writing. Especially in the first Discourse on the Arts and Sciences and also, to some extent, in the Discourse on Inequality. He had been a severe critic of civilization and culture. Then he wrote, nevertheless, the Emile and the Social Contract which seem to present a solution to the problems of culture and civilization, namely, the perfect social order contrary to the enthusiasm for the originally solitary man which he showed in these other writings.

Kant reconciles these writings and the Kantian reconciliation has become the classic interpretation of Rousseau up to the present day by which I do not mean to say that there may have been before Kant men who suggested this. I simply do not know. But Kant did have a very great influence especially on the Germans.

Nevertheless, this interpretation is not tenable. I will give you one proof of it. There are many more, but this is the most simple. According to the teaching of the Social Contract, the solution described there is wholly satisfactory because in a good society, a just society, man has both the advantages of the state of nature namely, freedom - a maximum of freedom - and at the same time security which he did not have in the state of nature. In the phrase of Rousseau, "man remains as free as he was heretofore" and, therefore, what else could you want? But this is not correct or sufficient.

I will read to you only one quote from the beginning of the first chapter of The Social Contract:

"Man was born free and everywhere he is in chains. Someone regards himself as the master of others while he doesn't cease to be a greater slave than they. How did this change take place? I do not know. What can make it legitimate? I believe I can answer this question."

So the theme of The Social Contract is to show what can render legitimate the transition from freedom to chains. Social life, however perfect, is still a life of chains according to Rousseau. Therefore, there is an ultimate cleavage in Rousseau's thought which one can show in all his writings. This cleavage is between society, however good, and the individual.

Rousseau himself - and that is the one reason why he wrote his autobiographic writings - presents himself as such a natural man, the only natural man because he lives at the margin of society and, therefore, has a kind of freedom which the citizen does not possess.

There is a very long note here on page 61 in which he deals with the antagonism between mankind's aspirations to its moral destiny and its unchangeable - well, read the second paragraph.

Reader: "I will mention the following by way of giving a few examples of this conflict between man's striving towards the fulfillment of his moral destiny on the one hand, and, on the other, his unalterable subjection to laws fit for the uncivilized and animal state."

Strauss: So, in other words, Kant is not an extreme utopist. Man can never get rid of that original heritage of bestiality.

In the first example which he gives he mentions that only the perfect civil constitution can resolve the fundamental antagonism between man's nature and civilization.

Reader: "This conflict only a perfect civil constitution could end."

Strauss: That again is one of the point preserved in Marx. Marx, of course, wouldn't speak of the perfect civil constitution because he believes in a withering away of the state, but if we use a broader term, "the perfect society" will resolve the contradiction between man's nature and civilization. Man's nature not alienated, not split up into departments, i.e. whole, entire and civilization means alienation, specialization, and that will be overcome in the final stage.

In the next paragraph . . . We cannot read that entire passage. He speaks of another contradiction, however, between men's nature and civilization which cannot be resolved becuase it is rooted in the fact that man ages and dies.

Here Marx has not discovered a recipe, how we can overcome that. Perhaps man can have longer life spans and have means to keep himself younger for a longer time, but fundamentally this problem is insoluble.

The third example which Kant gives is again a contradiction which can't be resolved. That has to do with inequality. We might read that.

Reader: "Human inequality may serve as our third example. Not inequality as regards natural talent or worldly good fortune, but with regard to universal human rights. There is much truth in Rousseau's complaint about this inequality. At the same time it is inseparable from culture so long as the latter progresses without plan."

Strauss: In otherwords, a planned progress of culture could dispose of this difficulty.

Kant did not think of such abominations but, still, he prepared parts of that doctrine. I think htat we can leave it at that.

At the beginning of the next paragraph. The translation here is wrong. I would translate it, "the conclusion of the story" meaning of the Biblical story. It is the conclusion of that story which Kant is interpretting forour benefit. Read the beginning of this section.

Reader: "The following period began with man's passage from an age of comfort and peace to one of labor and strife. This latter was the prelude of unification through society."

Strauss: Labor and strife. That is the characteristic of history. Again, a thought not unfamiliar from Hegel and Marx.

Then he discusses the first great case of discord - that between Cain and Abel. It is amusing to see how Kant interprets that story. That is on line 11.from bottom on the same page.

Reader: "Because of their difference in condition the farmer could seem to envy the herdsman and regard him as more favored by heaven. In fact, however, he rather considered him a nuisance so long as he remained in his neighborhood. For grazing cattle do not spare the crops."

The herdsman, having done his damage, could always take his cattle and go elsewhere, escaping all responsibility. That is easy for him for he leaves nothing behind which he will not find elsewhere. Hence, it was probably the farmer who first resorted to force in order to end the nuisance which the other had created.

The latter was probably conscious of no wrongdoing and it was probably the farmer who finally removed himself as far as possible from those who live the life of the herdsman for in no other ways would the encroachments . . ."

Strauss: That's enough. This is very amusing.

In other words, the wicked fellow was Abel not Cain because agriculture is much more progressive than pastoral life.

If you think that this is the philosopher most famous for his severe morality and yet he can develop this philosophy of history which has such shocking implications.

Of course, Kant is properly silent on Cain's slaying of Abel. This would be unbearable for him.

If you look at page 65 in your edition, there is a parenthesis.

Reader: Even now, the danger of war is the only factor which mitigates despotism for a state cannot be powerful unless it is wealthy but without liberty, wealth-producing activity cannot flourish. This is why a poor nation requires the broad support of a citizenry intensely commited to its survival to take the place of its lack of wealth. But such support, again, is possible only in a free nation."

Strauss: That is interesting. Kant here makes a distinction between despotism and a free society. The free society requires public spiritedness or, to use the more common expression, virtue. That was Montesquieu's famous teaching. The principle of republics and especially of democracies is virtue. In a despotic state there is no need or place for public spirit, for virtue as Montesquieu has said, but there is need for wealth. This is Kant's modification of Montesquieu's teaching. Since you cannot have wealth without freedom of acquisition there must be some freedom which a republic doesn't need - think of the Swiss or other mountainous people who are free as farmer and herdsmen without any trade to speak of.

The thought which Kant does not develop here, but elsewhere is this: The despots are compelled to grant freedom of acquisition. This freedom of trade, especially, will counteract in the long run - especially foreign trade - positive religion. Foreign trade allegedly creates peaceful relations among men whereas positive religion separates the nations. Positive religion which is the support of despotism, is therefore weakened by the freedom of trade which despotism must grant. That is a beautiful dialectic contruction.

We have seen, in the meantime, that the thesis that despotism must allow freedom of trade at least is by no means true. Both the German and the Russian experience show that what is true of the enlightened despotism of the 18th century is not true of despotism itself.

There are two more passages which are of some interest. On page 62, the second paragraph where Kant speaks of the inseparable connection between war and freedom, at least for the foreseeable future. In the present stage only the danger of war can make people live, alert and prevent the relapse into the state of the South Sea islanders.

Perpetual peace is the ideal, but the ideal can never be achieved within finite times. Perpetual peace means perpetual war. It may be a bit less. You may, for example, have a prohibition against the killing of non-fighting personnel and other qualifications, but still there will always be war. That is implied in this infinite progress.

One more point on page 68 in the second paragraph.

Reader: "An exposition of this history such as the above, then, is useful for man and conducive to his instruction and improvement. It teaches him that he must not blame the evils which oppress him on Providence nor attribute his own offense to an original sin committed by his first parents."

Strauss: This is the other point. The denial of original sin which, of course, goes together with the radically unorthodox interpretation of these chapters of the Bible.

Next time Theory and Practice.

Seminar on Kant

Session XII, May 11, 1967

That was a good paper, Mr. _____. There are a few points, however, which I will take up now. Regarding the artillery men, were you not a bit unfair to Kant?

Student: Yes. His point was that the artillery man was derogating theory because he simply did not understand the whole theory. Had he only understood the whole theory he wouldn't have been so disparaging.

Strauss: You mean on the engineers who made the canon.

Student: Yes. In other words, the practical art of the artillery man is dependent upon the theoretical.

Strauss: And he is only a fool if he is unaware of the fact . .

Student: Right. No one would ridicule him. Kant is being a bit unfair to the artillery man because no one would ridicule him.

Strauss: But, still, he derserves ridicule if he goes beyond his province, doesn't he? If he would simply say, "I am a simple artillery man and I do what my superior officers tell me. I would be wholly unable to make a canon, perhaps even to repair it." The modest man. Nobody could blame him. But not if he oversteps himself.

Now regarding women, Kant's shocking assertion. What is so shocking about it?

Student: I see nothing in the principle of autonomy which excludes all women just like that.

Strauss: What is so shocking in Kant, I believe, is the fact - Kant speaks a priori strictly and so human beings are considered rational beings alone and the consideration of sex doesn't enter. One can say that children should be excluded because . . .

Student: But even nine year old children can judge.

Strauss: Yes. Yes. I know that. So there is a minor difficulty with Kant.

When did Ames publish his book?

Student: At precisely the same time as Kant.

Strauss: But thereis no possibility that Kant could have read it.

You did not mention the fact that in the very title of this particular part of Kant's writing it is set "against Hobbes." To what extent is Kant against Hobbes?

Student: That seems to me the crucial difference - that Hobbes and Kant agree that the state of nature is poor, nasty and brutish. But I think that where Kant finds his own crucial difference is that he provides a standard for the legislator, the head of state to judge his laws, whereas Hobbes does not.

Strauss: That is true. But what does this have to do with the question of theory and practice? Because the whole piece, if you read it, is much more Hobbian than anti-Hobbian. But it is true. This difference remains. But what has this to do with the issue of theory and practice?

Student: Only through a conjunction of theory and practice is it possible to determine justice in the . . .

Strauss: Hobbes does the same thing. After all, he was not a man of affairs. He was a private man and, as such, wrote his Leviathan. He was not even a professor.

Alright. We will take this up. This is a question which we are compelled to raise.

We must understand the of Kant's writing. Otherwise, we miss many things completely. First of all, this writing appeared in 1793. What we read last time was written prior. Then came the Critique of Judgement in 1788, Religion Within the Limits of Mere Reason, 1793. Then Theory and Practice. Of the great works, only the Metaphysics of Morals which was published in 1797 is later.

Now where does the distinction between theory and practice come from? Actually the question is not between theory and practice. That is, of course, an old distinction, especially in Aristotle. But here we have a particular assertion that this may be true in theory meaning in practical or moral theory. Burke speaks of the old quarrel between speculation and practice and has said alot about this subject. But whether Kant knew these writings of Burke - I am sure The Reflection on the Revolution in France he has read. But I do not know when the German translation came out. The original was in 1791 and some translations appeared very soon in Germany. I am sorry that I forgot the dates. It is fairly possible.

The distinction appears quite frequently in Pascal's Provincial Letters where he attacks the Jesuit orders for making the distinction between theory and practice all the time.

Here is an example. "Is it permitted to kill one who has boxed one's ears? says this is permitted in speculation, but one should not advise it in practice because of the danger of hatred and the murders harmful to the state which might arise from it. But others have judged that if

one avoids these inconveniences - namely, murders - it is permitted in practice."

Pascal makes alot of these points and tries to show - fundamentally along the lines of Kant - that if something is permitted in theory, then it will also be safe in practice.

I would like to know the immediate reason why Kant wrote these essays. It doesn't appear from these essays and Mr. _____ was unable to get for us the Kant edition where there might have been a note by the editor. But this is not terribly important.

What is the issue. Kant states it right at the beginning. The question is not the relation between theoretical and practical science; it is rather an intra-practical distinction. Whether the theoretical basis of practice can be rejected in favor of a simple empiricism, empiricism in the older sense of the word: men who have grown old in active life never having studied. They are not better judges of practical matters than professors or other theoretical men.

Kant first makes the point that theory is not sufficient for practice because there is need for judgement, for subsumption. For example, some action has been done. It must be subsumed. Is it murder, is it justifiable homicide? The general rules will not help you. Even if you have some rules of subsumption, you will soon come to other questions of subsumption. Without the power of subsumption which is a power of judgement - a natural gift - theory is surely not sufficient as Kant grants.

Kant, of course, also finds that often a theory in itself may not be sufficient as theory. Then, of course, it is not the question of theory, but the question of insufficient or bad theory. This causes no question.

By theory Kant understands what appears on page 413, third paragraph. "Certain principles which constitute a whole." That is what he understands by theory in a very general way.

There are men of affairs, business, who out of ignorance despise theory. That is a well known thing, although I believe today less than in former times because the prestige of social scientists has so greatly increased in the last twenty or thirty years. But these men of affairs are more bearable than sophisticates who despise such theory also.

On page 414, line 3 following he gives some examples where this common saying might make sense.

Reader: "In other words, if more theories were added these theories would coincide with experience."

Strauss: That is the case of the artillery man.

Reader: "Still, it might appear that a theory which is concerned with objects of observation is quite different from a theory in which these objects are only present through concepts as in the case with objects of mathematics and philosophy. The objects of mathematics and philosophy may be thought of quite well and without objection by reason, but perhaps they can never be given but will remain empty ideas.

"In practice such ideas could be used either not at all or with disadvantage, If this were true the common saying would yet be right in such cases."

Strauss: Kant doesn't give any examples, but he says that in this sphere it might be possible. That is of no interest. Go on.

Reader: "In a theory which is founded on the concept of duty the concern over the empty ideality of that concept is eliminated for it would not be a duty to pursue a certain effect of our will if this effect were not possible in experience even if experience is imagined as complete or approaching completion. In the present discussion we are only dealing with this kind of theory."

Strauss: Let us stop here. So here the problem doesn't arise because the feasibility or possibility followsfrom the fact that the action is commanded by the moral law. "Thou canst becaust thou oughtst." Therefore, you don't have to engage in a study of human nature or psychology in order to make sure that it is feasible.

Now let us turn to the next paragraph.

Reader: "This maxim about theory and practice which has become common in our wordy and deedless times causes very great damage if it is applied to moral questions, i.e. moral or legal duties. For the canon of practical reason is involved in this realm. Here the value of practice depends upon its appropriateness to the theory upon which it is based. All is lost if empirical and consequently accidental conditions of the execution of the law are made the conditions of the law itself. Then, a practice which is calculated in relation to the probable result of previous experience is accorded the right of determining the theory itself."

Strauss: "Previous" is underlined at least in my edition of the original and surely must be read as if underlined. Experience to which the practitioners refer is always experience hitherto and, therefore, they are (if we can use present-day language) - businessmen (at least of former times) were always adherents of the status quo because through experience we know only what has happened hitherto.

The moral and political possibilities of mankind cannot be determined by previous practice. That is the crucial point. The opening of the moral-political horizon by liberating moral and political philosophy from dependence on experience

which always means experience of what man has been able to do hitherto.

In the next paragraph which is not in the translation Kant makes it clear that the issue is between the man of business, the man of the world, versus the man of the school, the professor. The former are in the habit of looking down on the latter. But this, as I said, has greatly changed. At least the right kind of professor is now in high demand by the businessman.

translated only the central part of this tripartite essay which is perfectly defensible. He had to make some selection because he had set out to make selections.

It is a pity that they did not translate the third part in this little book on history because it is one of the important utterance of Kant regarding history. But we have to make the best of what we have.

Now let us turn to the question of theory and practice in the public law. But the key point here is that Kant understands by public law not what is now ordinarily understood by public law, namely the positive law - but natural or rational public law. Not the public law of this or that country of this or that time, but what is eternally the public law.

This kind of public law emerged in the 17th century and the great and famous works of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau to mention only them, are works devoted to such natural public law. That is a great change from the traditional natural law teaching which was not in the first place natural public law, although it had some such implications.

Let us read at least the first paragraph so that we get a notion as to what it is about.

Reader: "Of all the contracts by which a number of people join themselves into a society, the compact for the establishment of a city constitution is of such a particular kind that this kind of compact is intrinsically distinct from all other kinds of compacts in the principle of its constitution.

"The joining of many persons for some common end which they all share is an element in all social compacts, but a joining of many is an end in itself which every one of them ought to have. In other words, a joining which is an absolute and first duty in any external relations among human beings who cannot avoid having mutu al influence. Such a union is only to be encountered in a society which has reached a specific state, that is the state constituting a commonwealth. The end which is a duty in itself in such external relations and which is itself the supreme formal condition of all other external duties is the rights of human beings to live under public coercive law by which every man's right is determined

and secured against the interference of every other man."

Strauss: Right by which is meant that every man is given what is due him. It is not a specific right he is mentioning.

So the social contract is distinguished from every other contract by the fact that it has a purpose which is, in itself, an end, and an end which everyone ought to have. This is unconditional and the first duty of man.

An ordinary business contract, on the other hand, does not have the character of a duty.

Even marriage does not have this character because man as man is under no obligation to marry as Kant, the bachelor, would have to admit as a matter of course.

Kant begins, then, with the notion of a social contract which has such a long history and which Kant understands almost in the same way as Rousseau. Almost, not quite because the connection with self-preservation as the end and the purpose for which man enters society, this is abandoned by Kant.

For Kant the moral contract is strictly derivative from a moral duty and this moral duty is related immediately to freedom, the fundamental right of man as man. This is developed by Kant in the next paragraph.

Reader: "The concept of an external right is derived from the concept of freedom in external relation of human beings to each other."

Strauss: In other words, Kant disregards here the whole question of moral freedom within man. He is only concerned with the external freedom, i.e., the intra-human.

Reader: "This concept has nothing at all to do with the purpose which all human beings naturally have. Namely, a desire for happiness. Nor has it anything to dowwith the means of achieving such happiness. Thus the desire for happiness must not be included as a ground for determining laws of external right."

Strauss: Equally excluded, of course - although Kant does not mention this - is self-preservation.

Reader: "Right is the limitation of every man's freedom so that it harmonizes with the freedom of every other man. Insofar as harmonization is possible . . ."

Strauss: No. "As that limitation . . ."

Reader: " . . . insofar as that limitation is possible according to a general law."

Strauss: I.e., the limitation must be guided by a principle. Otherwise, it would be arbitrary. One could say, of course,

that one has to draw a line somewhere, and we cast a lot as to where to draw the line. The drawing of the line by which the power of each individual is limited must have a principle and a rational principle. The principle is that it must be a universal law. Yes?

Reader: "Public law is the totality of external laws which make such a general consonance possible since every limitation of freedom by the will of another is called coercion. It follows that the civic constitution is a relationship of free men who, despite their freedom for joining with others, are nevertheless placed under coercive laws. This is so because it is so willed by pure, a priori legislating reasons."

Strauss: And so on. So Kant has now defined what is a right and what is public right. And public right is the basis of other kinds of right because, insofar as both are related to law, the private law presupposes a law-giver. The lawgiver and his position is a matter for public law.

Then Kant states the three principles a priori on which the state of civil society rests: freedom, equality and independence. "Autonomy" is a very wrong translation for that word.

Student: Self-sufficience?

Strauss: Who is self-sufficient. Indpendence in the sense in which we speak of economic independence. Kant will make it quite clear in the sequel. There you will see and if you have a better suggestion to make after we discuss that section let us know.

Kant in the immediate sequel explains these three a priori principles: freedom, equality and independence.

What is that freedom? Let us read.

Reader: "I will state the freedom of man as man as a principle for the constitution of the commonwealth in the following formula. No one may force anyone to be happy according to his manner of imagining the well-being of other men. Instead, every man may seek his happiness in the way that seems good to him so long as he does not infringe on the freedom of others to pursue a similar purpose when such freedom may coexist with the freedom of every other man according to a possible and general law."

Strauss: Let us stop here for a moment.

So I have the freedom to seek happiness as I understand happiness. If this is to have any moral meaning it must mean that I grant this same freedom to everyone else. And that, of course, limits my freedom. For example, I might think that happiness consists in having certain forms of kicks (to use a public expression, and these kicks might be harmful to

others. They are excluded, but otherwise - for example, if I find it very pleasant to use my leisure time - what was the example which Bacon used? - in playing scccer, I don't do harm to anyone else unless I try to force others to play with me.

In this connection Kant makes quite clear the political meaning of his fight against the principle of happiness. If happiness is the purpose of civil society then there is no fundamental objection possible to paternal government, government which wants to make the governed happy, but of course according to the notion of happiness which the governor happens to have. No paternal government is a consequence of the fact that the foundation of the whole doctrine is morality in the Kantian sense of the term.

Also (although Kant does not mention this here) it follows that the government can have no concern with the virtues and vices of the governed as such. This is also settled at least in the time of Locke.

In the sequel, number 2, he explains what equality is. The first point which he makes is that all members of civil society are equally subject to the laws. That means to Kant, however, that they are also subject to the head of the state. Kant does not explain here what the head of the state is, but, as he uses it all the time in the singular, we may assume that he is thinking of a king, the normal form of government in Germany and in other places at that time.

The head of the state, of course, is not subject to coercion, whereas everybody else is. Here the Hobbism of Kant is quite obvious.

Kant makes clear in the next paragraph, page 417, line three from bottom, what this equality doesn't mean.

Reader: "The general equality of men as subjects in a state coexists quite readily in the greatest inequality in the degrees of the possessions men have, whether the possessions consist of corporeal or spiritual superiority or in material possession besides. Hence, the general equality of men also coexists with great inequality of specific rights of which there may be many. Thus it follows that the welfare of one man may depend to a very great extent on the will of another man just as the poor are dependent on the rich."
S

Strauss: Not "just as the poor." That is not an example. Kant spells out what it means in brackets - the poor and the rich.

Reader: "Theone who is dependent must obey the other as a child obeys his parents or the wife her husband or again just as one man has command over another, one man serves, another pays, etc. Nevertheless, all subjects are equal to each other before the law which, as a pronouncement of the general will, can only be one. This law concerns the form

and not the matter of the object regarding which I may possess a right. For no man can coerce another except through publically-known law and, through its executor, the head of the state. And, by this same law, every man may resist to the same degree. No one can lose this right to coerce others except through a crime. In other words, no on can make an agreement or other legal transaction to the effect that he has no rights, but only duties. By such a contract he would deprive himself even of the right to make a contract and thus the contract would nullify itself."

Strauss: In other words, no on can surrender his righ to equality by a contract because the contract presupposes equality and there is thus a contradiction in the renunciation of equality and the presupposed equality. So no one can sell himself into slavery. Other than that, the greatest inequality is possible. For Kant his causes no difficulty, as you see.

Let us read the next paragrap h.

Reader: "From this concept of the equality of man as subject in a commonwealth the following formula is derived. Every member of a commonwealth must be able to reach every level of status in the commonwealth which can belong to a subject and which he can achieve by his talent, his industry, or his good fortune. No fellow subject can stand in his way as a result of hereditary priviledge and thus keep him and his descendents down forever."

Strauss: That is implied in equality as Kant means it. That is what we now call an open society.

Now let us see this important passage in the next paragraph.

Reader: That isn't included in the English and Freidrich didn't even give us the dots.

Strauss: I see. Because there is one remark which is implied but which is made clear in the sequel.

"Legislation according to which all men who belong to a people as subjects are in a juridical state altogether, namely, the equality of action and reaction of an arbitrariness that limits itself mutually according to the universal law of freedom."

This "mutual limitation," that is the thing which I call the horizontal limitation. That men are limited by other men who have an interest in limiting them, a self-interest. This is for their own benefit and, therefore, this limitation is effective contrary to a vertical limitation coming from God or from the natural end of man, and, according to this view, these are not effective means of limitation.

On page 419, line3 following.

Reader: "He may bequath everything else because ethereal things do not concern the personality and can be acquired as property and disposed of again. In the line of succession this may cause a considerable inequality of wealth among members of the commonwealth such as the inequality between the mercenary and his employer, the estate owner and the hired man. No man can lose the equality he has in the commonwealth as a subject except through his own crime. And, especially, he cannot lose that equality through a contract or as a result of military occupation for he cannot cease by any legal act either his own or another's to be master of himself. No man may enter into the class of domestic animals which can be used for all services the [illegible] master pleases and which are maintained in service without their consent as long as the master wishes even though he is subject to the restriction not to cripple or kill them. This may, as with the Indians, be sanctioned by religion.

"Man may be considered happy in any condition if he is conscious that his condition is due to himself, his ability or his earnest effort or circumstances for which others cannot be blamed. But he may not be considered happy if his condition is due to the irresistable will of another and if he does not rise to the same status as others who, as his cosubjects, had no advantage over him as far as rights are concerned."

Strauss: So, in other words, Kant does not allow that inequalities due to society, as people now say, as distinguished from the law, give a legal claim. Inequality which is due to chance is of no concern as far as right is concerned.

Of course, practical inequalities may be more annoying and revolting than the legal inequalities. That is the old story. But Kant would say that that is of no interest because this has to do with happiness and we are unconcerned with right.

This leads, of course, to the famous saying of that the poor and the rich are equally forbidden to sleep under bridges and what was the second one? I forget, but something similar. In other words, things which no rich man has ever attempted to do.

Kant is here quite old-fashioned.

Now we come to the third point - the independence. Let us see what this means in practice. In other words, Kant makes the distinction between active and passive citizenship and only men of property, however small, can be active citizens. That was, of course, a principle very well-known at that time and I think also in this country, at least in some states.

Let us read in this number 3 - page 420, line 4.

Reader: "All right depends upon laws. A publicly known law determining what everyone shall be legally permitted or forbidden is an act of the public will from which all right proceeds and which cannot itself act contrary to right for this purpose . . ."

Strauss: Kant explains here in a somewhat clearer way than Rousseau himself had done, what Rousseau meant when he said, "The general will cannot err." The point is this: If we are to be subjected to the law, to the positive law, without any possibility of an appeal to a natural law - that was the key point in Rousseau. The idea was that such appeals are ineffectual. In order to makes these appeals unnecessary you have to have a construction of the commonwealth which makes it impossible for the legislator to give unjust laws.

Here Kant states the principle: No one can do to himself any injustices. Therefore, if the citizen body assembly imposes upon itself a law, it cannot do itself an injustice because it wills it.

This is very good in theory, but how does it work out in practice? Let us see. Yes?

Reader: " . . . this purpose no other will is possible but the will of the entire people because through this will all men decide about all men and, hence, everyone decides about himself. For no one can be considered unjust to himself."

Strauss: So, in other words, someone who does not belong to the people - a monarch or king or whatever - is, of course, very capable of doing injustices. Someone who is above the law can very well establish a law which is bad or unjust. But if you impose a law upon yourself as well as upon others in the act of legislation there will be no unjust legislation. Yes?

Reader: "This basic law which originates only in the general and united will of the people is called the original contract. He who has the right to vote on basic legislation is called **a citizen** - in the German the distinction between _____ and _____ who is a bourgeoisie."

Strauss: This distinction which was made by Rousseau before and megrated, then, to Marx and led to his concept of the bourgeoise, is here used.

What is a citizen as distinguished from a bourgeoisie?

Reader: "The requisite quality for this - apart from the natural one that the person not be a child or a woman - is only this, that such a person be his own master and, hence, that he have some property under which we may include any art, craft or science that would provide him with sustenance. A man who, when he must earn his livelihood from others, acquires property only by selling what is his own and not by

conceding to others the right to make use of his strength. Consequently, he serves no one in the strict sense of the word but the commonweal."

Strauss: What is the line of demarcation between the active and the passive citizens? The passive citizen is the one who can only live by permitting others to use his own powers. More simply, the man who cannot be an active citizen is the one who has to sell his own powers as distinguished by others who can live by selling their property. Your powers - say of the man who carries heavy burdens - these powers are not properties strictly speaking. You cannot sell them, but you can sell the use of them. This is the line which Kant draws.

The last sentence of the footnote is quite interesting. Kant gives some examples.

Reader: " . . . the shopkeeper, the day laborer and the hairdresser. These are operators and not artisans in the wider extension of the word, and thus not members of the state and, therefore, not qualified to be citizens of the state."

Strauss: In other words, the domestic servant, the shop assistant and even the barber. But man who I give the task to cut my firewood or the tailor to whom I give my clothes, they are different because they have property in a sense. Read the last sentence in the note. This should be sufficient for our present purposes.

Reader: "It is, I confess, somewhat hard to make precise the requirements in order to raise a claim to the status of a man who is his own master."

Strauss: For an a priori doctrine this is rather bad.

What was the usual view? The usual justification of this common practice of people without property not being able to be citizens.

Student: So that they have a stake in society.

Strauss: Sure. And, as Rousseau put it, "They might sell their liberty for bread." Therefore, they ought not to have the vote.

This reason for Kant is, of course, excluded by the a priori character of Kant's doctrine because it is experiential. Nevertheless, he preserves this practice of his time.

Student: Is it only in response to Kant that Marx raises this business of the laborer being the proprietor? Or was this because of the English theoriests?

Strauss: Adam Smith, much more. In this matter Kant follows Adam Smith. He refers to him.

Student: If you are going to admit that the day laborer is a proprietor over his labor . . .

Strauss: But this kind of property is different from what is ordinarily is called property. Mr. _____ _?

Student 2: I'm trying to understand what Kant is getting at by including the artists and scientists among those having property. The difference seems to be that the man who has an art or science is higher than that of a barber because he is exercising his rationality.

Strauss: Well, why the barber? In the case of the domestic servant one can understand. In a way, he is in the hands of his master and he would, of course, vote as his master tells him and so on. But why the poor barber? I believe that that has something to do with an entirely different notion just inherited whichwe can understand on the basis of Aristotle who discusses this matter. There are certain things which degrade a man, according to this gentleman's point of view, especially those which consist in those of serving the body of another human being. So no one one is degraded by doing his won shaving, but if you shave someone else as a way of earning a living this is degrading.

This kind of thing carried over for a long time. Today it is almost completely forgotten.

This example shows very well that the consideration of happiness does have some utility in political matters. The basis of universal suffrage as it came to be understood in the 19th century, especially in the second half, was that these masses of people have no possibility of improving their lot and of protecting their simple rights except if they get the vote. For Kant this is only an irrelevant consideration of happiness.

Then there is another point which Kant makes here on page 421, the second paragraph.

Reader: "All who possess the right to vote must agree on this basic law of how to arrive at public justice. For if they did not there would be a conflict of law between those who agree to it and those who do not which would necessitate a still higher legal principle to decide the issue. Since such general agreement cannot be expected of an entire people only a majority of the votes must be considered to be the best that can be obtained. In a large nation even this majority will not be that of the voters, but merely that of delegates representing the people. But then this principle of being satisfied by a majority will have to be presumed as having been accepted by general agreement, that is, through a contract. Hence this principle will have to be presumed to be the supreme reason for constituting a civil constitution."

Strauss: So, in other words, the legislator is not the people, but the elected representatives of the people. That is connected with the very notion of the social contract. Kant makes, then, clear in the next paragraph that this original contract which, alone, can be the basis of a civil society and, hence, a thoroughly legitimate society. This original contract, however, is not to be presupposed a fact. It would be impossible as such a fact as Kant says in parenthesis. But it is a mere idea of reason . . .

Reader: "which, however, has its indubitable practical reality. Namely, to oblige every legislator to give us laws in such a manner that the laws could have originated from the united will of the entire people. And, to regard every subject insofar as he is a citizen as though he had consented to such an expression of the general will. This is the testing stone of the rightness of every publicly known law for if the law were such that it were impossible for the entire people to give their consent to it as, for example, a law that a certain class of subjects by inheritance should have the priviledge of the status of lords, then such a law is unjust. On the other hand, if there is a mere possibility that the people might consent to a certain law then it is a duty to consider that the law is just even though at the moment the people might be in such a position or have a point of view that would result in their refusal to give their consent to it is asked."

Strauss: Now what is the problem which Kant tries to solve in this somewhat strange way? The fact that you do not like a law is not a reason why you should disobey it was always taken for granted and I suppose that it still is, although there may be some confusion in some quarters. But the question is: Am I obliged to obey an unjust law?

Kant states here the principle which permits us to distinguish between a just and an unjust law.

Rousseau tried to find a quasi-mechanical guarantee for the justness of laws by having the citizen body assemble without representatives who might be bribed and develop a special interest different from that of the people in general. So the whole citizen body assembled openly discusses the laws and reaches a conclusion. Rousseau believes - at least in some passages - that the outcome of such a deliberation cannot but be a just law. Yes?

Student: When Kant was talking about the public will and said "No on can be unjust to himself," would that statement apply only to the original contract?

Strauss: No. The original contract itself is of no use. It must be what is effective in present legislation.

Student: If no one can be unjust to himself how is it that unjust laws can be passed?

Strauss: The point that Rousseau made on the basis of certain, you can say legal maxims, was that the general will as Rousseau calls it, the only will which deserves to be called the just legislator, cannot err, i.e. cannot pass unjust laws. The point is that if you wish something, even if it is something harmful, if you wish it and it happens, no injustice is done. A simple case. You buy something which it is foolish to buy, but it is your own fault. Caveat emptor. To him who wills no unjustice happens. This is, of course, questionable from quite a few points of view, but for crude practical purposes it is sufficient.

The people as people cannot do injustice to itself as people. The king, separated from the people, could very well do injustice to the people.

Student: That is why I asked if it only applies to the original contract. How does the legislator becomes . . .

Strauss: divorced. Kant's wholly un-Rousseauan point. Kant understands here the legislator different from the whole citizen body assembled. Therefore, the contract leading to the town meeting, to the assembly of the citizens, cannot be a fact, but must be a mere idea of reason which is to guide the king so the king is morally obliged to, whenever he makes a law, raise this question: Could the people have assented to this law or given itself this law? He doesn't need any other criterion. Yes?

Student 2: Isn't one of the necessary conditions, possibly in Rousseau and Kant both, of the members passing their votes in the general will that when they go into the voting booths they practically forget that they happen to be estate owners or not estate owners, and considers the issue a priori?

Strauss: Rousseau was not inclined to this. He has written quite a few chapters on the people and how the people must be constituted if this thing is to work. For example, if there is very great economic inequality, as they call it now, then it wouldn't work. If there is very great ethnic heterogeneity.

In other words, the dissimilarity among these citizens must be kept within narrow bounds.

Student: In other words, that it be an empirical condition . .

Strauss: Yes. Sure. Rousseau never claimed to have an a priori theory. But Kant does and, therefore, he cannot bring in these kinds of considerations.

On the other hand, Kant remains much closer to practice because he speaks of a monastic legislator, separate from the people, whereas Rousseau thought of small communities like his native Geneva or the ancient, classical cities as the normal political unit.

Student 3: It seems to me that Kant's talk about the near possibility that people will consent to something, he is not talking about voting booths and empirical consent.

Strauss: No. No voting studies in Kant. No polls.

He must simply say that the legislator must ask himself how the people as sensible human beings would have accepted.

Student: I am thinking for example, of the essay, (inaudible) and there it is perfectly clear that even if a present generation would do something even then . . .

Strauss: He refers to that here in this writing also. What they might agree to, ground down by ignorance, poverty and what have you, that of course no. That could never lead to rational laws. But what they reasonably would assent to - that would lead to rational laws.

Let us read this note here.

Reader: "For example, if a war tax proportional for all subjects were imposed the subjects cannot, because the tax is onerous claim that the tax is unjust because the war is unnecessary in their opinion. On that question they are not entitled to judge."

Strauss: So that is a matter strictly for the executive, you would say.

Student: "But it is always possible that the war is inevitable and, hence, the tax is indispensable and, as so, must be considered rightful in the judgement of the subjects."

Strauss: "Legitimate" would perhaps be a better translation.

In other words, you cannot make any objection to it on the grounds of right. As regards prudence and experience, that is a long question. We are entitled to do quite a few things which may be inexpedient. Think of many marriages which are perfectly legitimate but prove to be inexpedient.

Now in the sequel Kant makes clear - and now we come to a key point because up until know we have only been concerned with how we can get just laws. But what about unjust laws? That is the interesting question and Kant makes clear that no right to disobey bad and unjust laws. (It is not in the translation.) Again, the happiness of the legislator is not the concern of the legislator, but only the right.

On page 423, beginning of paragraph 2.

Reader: "From this it follows that all resistance against the supreme legislative power, all instigation to rebellion is the worst and most punishable crime in the commonwealth because this destroyes the foundations of a commonwealth."

Strauss: Yes. Later on there is a note which also has been omitted. Kant denies altogether a right based on necessity. For example, there is a right which I have to kill a man who tries to kill me. Kant denies that there is such a necessary right except where duties conflict with one another. But this can only mean that absolute duties conflict or unconditioned duties conflict with conditioned duties. For example, a man has a duty to his father. But if his father becomes a traitor or a spy or something, then it is the duty of the son, according to Kant, to denounce his father. This duty to denounce is an absolute, unconditioned duty. Whereas the duty to help his father is subordinate to the other and, therefore, a conditioned duty.

Generally stated, Kant denies that there can be a strict conflict of duties and, naturally, if the moral law is the law of reason and the principle of reason is the principle of contradiction, there cannot be a conflict of duty.

Kant discusses here the famous case of the two shipwrecked men on the same plank. The one in order to save himself pushes the other into the sea. Kant says that to preserve my life is only a conditioned duty. Namely, if it can be done without crime. But to kill another man who does not bring me in any danger - not to kill such a man is an unconditioned duty.

Therefore, to apply to our case, there cannot be a right to resist government or to rebel under any circumstance. That is an unconditioned duty.

Kant is aware that in taking this view he differs from the more common view of the natural law teachers who admitted a right to resist tyranny. That is on page 424. But Locke says the same thing.

Student: Why does he pick someone like ?

Strauss: Because he was a very respected German professor of natural law. This perfectly normal man, uncontroversial, Mainstreet - even he had said in absolutistic Germany, "You may resist or perhaps kill a tyrant." Kant says, "If even such a nice man says such a horrible thing - not Locke who was, of course, never a professor in England - no one can disregard it."

Kants grounds are stated and again this is not in the translation. But the key point is this: You cannot generalize, universalize this maxim. My maxim is to refuse to obey the government or to rebel in case the government does something which I regard as unjust. Try to universalize, is Kant's point, and you will see that it is not universalizable. Therefore, it is not morally possible.

This, of course, is diametrically opposed to the traditional view and especially to Burke. For Kant there is no limitation of these universal laws by consideration of the circumstances. Yes?

Student: If the end of society is neither happiness nor self-preservation then it would seem that that principle stating the right of revolution is universalizable - a certain amount of anarcy, of course.

Strauss: That means, however, that you are under an obligation to do everything in your power to keep a state in which there is rule of law. Revolution means necessarily a suspension, a break in that rule of law. Therefore, you contradict yourself.

A few more points. Kant makes clear in the sequel that the root of the evil, i.e. what induces men to believe in a right of tyranny, is the principle of happiness. They regard themselves as miserable, as oppressed and, therefore, they think that they are entitled to kill a fellow like Nero or, maybe a less Neronic man.

Kant is then compelled to criticize British doctrine and practice of revolution. The key point here is that the English are pround of the Gorious Rebellion. But, on the other hand they don't dare to be proud of it because they feel that it is a principle which cannot so easily be avowed. Therefore, they have said that James II was not deposed, but that he lay down the crown which is part of the story. Kant makes this quite clear in a footnote.

Reader: "No rife in a state can be kept under cover by a secret, mental reservation, least of all the right of revolution which the people claim as belonging to the constitution because all laws derived from it must be considered to have sprung from a public will. Therefore, the constitution would, if it permitted revolution, have to declare this right publicly as well as a procedure by which to make use of it."

Strauss: Kant will discuss this principle of publicity as the simple test of morality in <u>Perpetual Peace</u>.

So, according to Kant, there cannot be dormant rights, rights prudently concealed and only to be appealed to in emergency cases.

I read to you a passage from a Protestant writer of the late 17th century, . He held that it is better for public peace that the people do not know the true extent of their powers, meaning their right to revel. The rights of the people are "remedies which must not be wasted or applied in the case of minor wrongs. They are mysteries which must not be profaned by exposing them too much before the eyes of the common herd. When it comes to the destruction of the state or religion, then these remedies can be produced. Beyond that, I think that it is not evil that they should be covered with silence."

For Kant this is the height of immorality. But most people would say that it is a prudent thing. That there be fires which should not be too much in sight, but which should nevertheless be kept in reserve.

So there is, then, no right of disobeying the government, the law, and no right of rebellion whatsoever.

This is all in full agreement with Hobbes, of course, and not with Locke or Rousseau despite the fact that Hobbes is concerned with security at all costs.

Even under Nero if you were not a courtier - which would be great folly in the first place - you are much safer that in a civil war. That is Hobbes' simple reason.

Kant is not concerned with security in this sense, but with the security of right. And, doubtless, rights become questionalbe as long as there is a civil war. Right and its basis. Who is the legislator in such a period?

Why, then, does Kant oppose Hobbes? We have to discuss this briefly. Page 426, bottom.

Reader: "Hobbes is of the opposite opinion. According to him, the head of the state is not obliged to anything by contract and he can act contrary to law and right against the citizen in whatever way he might decide regarding him. This proposition would be correct if that which is contrary to law and right were understood to mean a kind of injury providing the injured with a right against him who has acted contrary to law and right."

Strauss: Coercive right. Kant agrees even against Nero there is no coercive right of the subjects against Nero. No writ runs against the king. But how does Kant conclude this though?

Reader: "But stated so generally as Hobbes does the proposition is terrifying."

Strauss: So why is it terrifying? Because it is obviously necessary to admit that such beasts like Nero can do wrong. It may be a crude rule of legal procedure to say that the king can do no wrong, but this cannot be seriously true. It may be true in law courts, but not simply. That is the point where Kant disagrees with Hobbes.

The situation with Hobbes is a bit more complicated and you can say that Hobbes finds a verbal way out. He says that the king, the sovereign can do no wrong. He can do no injustice. But he can be inequitable. I.e., every transgression of the natural law, the moral law, is an act of inequity, of iniquity, but not of injustice. Well, that is all we need. Namely, an objective criterion for distinguishing between permissable and impermissable acts of the sovereign.

Verbally, Kant is right against Locke because Locke speaks of such considerations as iniquity and equity which are not relevant politically. But they are possible.

Then Kant shows another point of deviation from Locke, although not explicitly stated as such. What we need in order to keep the governors away from Neronic conduct is freedom of the press. Kant does not discuss what will happen if the situation does not permit freedom of the press, but I would suppose that you have to still go on obeying.

But the question which we must answer in conclusion is: Why is this critique of Hobbes related to the issue of theory and practice?

I think that we find the answer on page 428 in the third paragraph.

Reader: "Nowhere do people engaged in practical pursuit speak with more pretentiousness derogatory of theory and neglecting all pure rational principles than on the question of what is required for a good constitution. This is because a legal constitution which has existed a long time accustoms people to its rule by and by, and makes them inclined to evaluated their happiness as well as their rights in the light of the conditions under which everything has been quietly going forward. Men fail to do the opposite. Namely, to evaluate the existing constitution according to concepts provided by reason in regard to both happiness and right.

"As a result men prefer this passive state to the dangerous path of seeking a better one. They are following the maxim which Hippocrates urges doctors to keep in mind: Judgement is uncertain and experiment injurious.

"In spite of their differences, all constitutions which have existed a long time, whatever their faults, produce one and the same result. Namely that people become satisfied with what they have. It follows from this that in considering peoples' welfare theory is apparently not valuable, but all depends upon practices derived . . ."

Strauss: No. There is, in fact, no theory if you consider the developing of the people. But everything is based on a practice which obeys experience. So that is the point.

All other moral and political teachers and, therefore, also Hobbes, take their bearings by the happiness of the individual or the people, not by the moral law. And, as a consequence, they cannot have a theory strictly speaking and they must be worshippers of practice based on previous experience. This is the connection.

Seminar on Kant: Session 13
May 16, 1967

Thank you. That was a fine paper and also very finely delivered. Also the supererogatory quality of having some injection of humor. You are a political scientist, Mr. _____?

Student: I am a part-time political scientist. My original training was in theology.

Strauss: I noticed that. But, still, you are at present a political scientist, aren't you?

Student: No. I am a Methodist chaplain.

Strauss: Oh. I am sorry. I see. Because I was wondering what an orthodox social scientist would say if in this building, in a political science seminar, we are discussing the end of all things. What would you say to a social scientist who would make this objection? That this is not a proper subject for social science.

Student: Insofar as the social scientist is a valuing being he has to take into consideration the end of those values.

Strauss: But do you have to go so far? I mean, what is the greatest, most awful problem concerning - if not social scientists- at least socially and politically interested people today? You read it every day in the newspapers.

Student: You mean the breakdown of morality?

Strauss: No. I mean something much more terrible in a way. Really, the end of all things.

Student: You mean in terms of the immanent danger of conflagration.

Strauss: The threat of nuclear war. According to a very common interetation, the end of all things. So we are not so far away from political things.

Now the second question which I would like to address to you is this: This essay, on The End of All Things, is here reprinted in a book called On History. What is the connection between the end of all things and the problem with which we are here primarily concerned, i.e. the problem of history?

Student: Well, it has to do with the first section of the End of all Things which then relates to morality which is concerned about consequences and, thus, history.

Strauss: But Kant opens the essay quoting the phrase in German: man goes when he dies, from time into eternity. This doesn't seem to have any immediate connection with the problem of history. Does it?

Student: No. As far as I can see he suggests that this doesn't have any noumenal content and, therefore, it can only be related to morality.

Strauss: But, still, Kant begins with a reflection upon the end of all things in the sense of the end which every individual meets when dying. Then there is the end of all things in the sense of the end of all history, let us say. What is your connection between the two things and is this made clear by Kant?

Student: I don't think it is made clear by Kant. He doesn't make a distinction between the end of personal existence and the end of time as a category of history.

Strauss: And also of the end of the human race on earth, at least. Thank you very much.

I deplore that they did not translate for this volume the third part of Kant's writing Theory and Practice which deals with the relation of theory and practice in international law. Because this is that part of Theory and Practice which has the closest connection with the problem of the philosophy of history. The third part of Theory and Practice is directed against Kant's contemporary Moses Mendellsohn. Mendellsohn had opposed a writing of Mendellsohn's friend, Lessing, that the education of the human race which was a sketch of a philosophy of history - the development of man understood as God's educating the human race and, therefore, a meaningful process. Mendellsohn rejected that and took the ordinary, older view that history is just an account of the ups and downs in morality, in civilization, in science, in art and so forth which has no rhyme and reason, no direction. The most simply statement of that older view known to me occurs in Xenopon's Greek History. This work begins with an expression, "Thereafter." I believe it is the only book ever written which begins with the word, "thereafter." I have heard of a sermon beginning with the word, "But." The usual explanation is that Xenophon was continuing Thucydides' history and hence began with the word "thereafter." Namely, after the last thing which Thucydides told. This would be a sign of a great ineptitude on the part of any writer, I believe. In addition, the word ends, in a sense, with the word "thereafter." Xenophon ends his book with the story of the Battle of and the Greeks had believed at this time that this battle would bring order into the complete confusion in which Greece was before. Then, lo and behold, after the battle the confusion was as great, if not greater, than it was before. Then Xenophon says, "But what happened thereafter that someone else may describe." So one may say that it begins and ends with the word "thereafter," and the lesson which it contains is this: thereafter, thereafter, thereafter, and all this confusion. That is, we can say, the classic view which was, of course, rejected by the philosophy of history.

This same Mendellsohn who restated in this late age the older view, was the author of a book called On Immortality or Phaedo which was, in a way, Plato's Phaedo taken over, but made for the use of the 18th century. The demonstrations were changed and it was, at that time, a very famous book. The point here is

that Mendellsohn believed in an infinite progress of each individual after death. No progress of the human race, however,

Mendellsohn was attacked for his work, On Immortality, by Herder with whom we have made an acquaintance in this course. Herder objects to Mendellsohn on this grounds: Mendellsohn had said that the whole play of the individual's life takes place only partly on earth, in this life. The later part takes place in another life. And Herder says against Mendellsohn that the five acts are in this life. I think that there is a connection between this view that the five acts are in this life and Herder's turning to philosophy of history. This much again about the background of Kant's philosophy of history and the problem peculiar to it.

Let us now turn to The End of All Things. First, are there any points regarding this general question which you would like to raise? Alright, then. Let us turn to our assignment.

In the first two paragraphs Kant makes this point: People - especially in German - say that the dying man is going from time into eternity. This phrase implies that eternity is not time or that death is the end of all time. The duration after death is not temporal. This duration which is not temporal is not intelligible theoretically, but it is possibly of moral significance. This is the thought with which Kant opens the essay.

Then he goes on, in the third paragraph, to the question of the end of all time, but no longer now of the individual, but the last day - judgement day, doomsday. Here the complication arises that this doomsday, the day of judgement, at the same time seems to include the end of the physical universe. Let us read the second half of this paragraph.

Reader: "Thus the Last Day also comprehends the Final Judgment. . . . must only be regarded as making Doomsday and its moral consequences, which are not theoretically conceivable to us, in some way perceptible to us."

Strauss: So, in other words, the end of the physical universe is of no serious consideration to Kant. It could only be a kind of symbol of Judgment Day.

The Last Day, of course, still belongs to time. It is a day. But after that day nothing happens any more. For there is no happening without time as Kant makes clear in the preceding half of this paragraph.

Then, in a way as he does in the Critique of Pure Reason, Kant presents an antinomy. This time, of course, the substance of the antinomy is different. There are two possibilities. One called unitarianism and the other called dualism. This has nothing to do with unitarianism in the orthodox sense of the word, that is the denial of the trinity. The unitarians are those who assert that all men will receive eternal bliss. There may be all kinds of penances in between, but eventually all men will achieve eternal bliss. The dualists, on the other hand, divine the human race into two classes: those who are blessed

or predestined to salvation and those who are cursed or damned. This antinomy can as little be settled by theoretical reason as the antinomies presented in the Critique of Pure Reason. But they can be settled from a moral point of view. They cannot be settled theoretically for a reason which is itself a moral reason. Because no one can know of himself or anybody else whether he deserves eternal bliss or eternal misery. We might be regarded as very fine fellows and yet if we would deduct what we owe to good luck - for example, absence of temptations or that we have a good temper by nature for which we are in no way responsible - then things would look very different.

But the issue can be settled from the point of view of dualism, i.e. that some people are destined for eternal misery and some for eternal bliss because this is the only way in which we will be protected against self-complacency. If we are sure that nothing can happen to us we won't take this eternity as seriously as we would if we regard the alternative as an open one.

So this is, then, settled. And now Kant begins in this connection another reflection. On page 72 in your translation (On History, ed. Lewis White Beck), five lines from the bottom.

Reader: "Consequently the system of the Unitarian, as well as that of the Dualist, both considered as dogma, seem totally to exceed the speculative faculty of human reason, and everything seems to reduce us to restricting those rational Ideas simply to the conditions of practical use only."

Strauss: This is an idea of reason - the end of all things. That we will see later. Yes?

Reader: "For we still see nothing ahead of us that could apprise us at the present time of our fate in a coming world except the judgment of our own conscience, that is, what our current moral state, so far as we are cognizant of it, permits us rationally to judge of the matter. That is to say, we must judge that those principles of our behavior in life which we have found governing in us (be they good or evil) until its end, will also continue to prevail after death, and we have not the slightest reason to assume an alteration of them in that future."

Strauss: So there will be no change in our conduct after death. The time in which we have the chance of influencing our eternal faith is time, i.e. as long as we live in time.

Hence, everything depends upon our conduct in this life. We cannot correct our mistakes after death. We can only do it now.

Now let us turn to the next paragraph.

Reader: "But why do people expect an end of the world at all?"

Strauss: So Kant now turns to a more fundamental consideration. Given his judgment as to what is the right judgment on what the end of all things is, now he raises a more fundamental question: Why bring up this question at all? Is it itself a necessary question? Go on.

Reader: "And even if this is granted them, why precisely a terrifying end (which is the case for the majority of the human race)?

Strauss: Let us stop here for a moment. When Kant goes into this question he does not take up for one moment one possibility which seems so obvious. I am not speaking now, of course, of the thermonuclear bomb, but of the old story stemming from Greek philosophy that if the visible universe has come into being as most people, with the exception of Aristotle, assume, then from the point of view of reason alone it will perish again. This consideration does not play any role for Kant as we have seen here. That is quite striking.

Read on, please.

Reader: "The basis for the first belief seems to be that reason tells them the duration of the world has a value . . . is the only measure proper to the highest wisdom and justice (in the opinion of the greatest number of people)."

Strauss: In other words, there is in Kant no consideration of physical or physiological kind. In that long footnote Kant gives some examples of how men consider the human life and I have to praise Mr. _____ by opposing freedom of speech by not quoting the whole. I think that that is a more liberal procedure than what some people now regard as the most liberal procedure.

Now Kant in the sequel on the bottom of page 74 answers the question, "Why an end with terror?" the question which he has now answered. What is that answer?

Reader: "In point of fact, men, not without reason, feel the burden of their existence . . . as a revelatory scene attended by terrors which is thought of as preceding the last things."

Strauss: This problem which Kant states here about the disproportion of man's moral development and his technical development - scientific, artistic development - Kant had spoken of this before in the writings which we have discussed. From where does Kant know this problem immediately?

Student: Rousseau.

Strauss: Exactly. Kant, as we have already seen in Theory and Practice, considers Rousseau to have found a solution to this difficulty in his Emile and the Social Contract. This solution is the one which Kant accepts. He calls it the heroic belief in a great future in converse to the unheroic belief in a terrible end, Doomsday. In the present parlance, the optimist versus the pessimist. And Kant takes firmly the side of the optimist not because he is of such a sanguine temper, but because he regards it as his moral duty to be an "optimist." The pessimists are the ones who have a moral failing because they disregard their duty. Yes?

Student: Since there are empirical proofs for the superiority of morality in our age over all former ages, why is this belief so heroic?

Strauss: Because the empirical proof is not good enough. Because it could be that now in the age of Frederick the Great the abolition of torture, a milder punishment. And, of course, what happened in the French Revolution - this was written after the outbreak of the French Revolution. These are all hopeful signs. But a pessimist could say, "Wait for the next turn of fate." Therefore, these empirical proofs are mildly right corroborations of the true fate which has a moral origin. We will speak of that later.

To repeat, that is a heroic belief. Namely, it is a belief - in a way, a hope against hope. Otherwise it would be a shallow optimism which has no value. The case seems to be stacked against the hope because we see always so much bestiality and vice and so on. Yet we are morally obliged to hope.

Once we have reached this point we note one thing. The essay began with a quote regarding the death of the individual or the fate of the individual after death. Now we have come to the question of an end of history or the question of the fate of the human race. This shift has taken place insensibly. This does not mean that Kant was not aware of it while writing this piece, but surely he doesn't stress this shift.

Let us now turn to that note on the bottom of page 75.

Reader: "We are dealing (or playing) here simply with Ideas which reason itself creates, the objects of which (if it possesses any) lie completely beyond our field of vision."

Strauss: Kant deals here with ideas in the Kantian sense, Namely, with ideas which reason itself creates or which are products of our own reason, as he will say somewhat later. But Kant says that it is not quite serious. We are playing with these things. He leaves it open here whether these ideas have any objects. It is not quite serious.

Does this remind you of another writing of Kant where he was also explicitly playing?

Student: <u>The Conjuctural Beginning of the Human Race</u>.

Strauss: Yes. It deals with the beginning of the Bible while omitting the first chapter of Genesis as irrelevant. And here we have the end of the Bible. So this work is a counterpart to <u>The Conjectural Beginnings</u> and must, therefore, be read in the way in which we have learned to read <u>The Conjectural Beginnings</u>. Kant is trying to find reason where there is not necessarily reason in the first place. What did Lessing say of Leibniz? That he tried to get sparks from a flint meaning that there may be in what they no would call mythical utterances some ideas of reason involved. Kant takes the benefit of the doubt and he finds something in them. But he is in no way compelled to believe in the sacredness of these texts. That is obvious. So, in this sense, he is playing.

I repeat the expression which we have here. The notion of an end of all things is a product of our own reason, an idea of our reason, i.e. we do not know anything of that by virtue of

revelation because whatever revelation may contain, it could never be intelligible to us if we did not spontaneously produce that idea which then would make intelligible an otherwise unintelligible utterance of a sacred text. Is this clear? There cannot be any revelation strictly speaking which tells man something that his own reason cannot tell him.

Now let us turn to the second paragraph on page 76.

Reader: "Accordingly, the whole will be divided and presented in three sections: 1) in the natural end of all things conforming to the order of moral ends of divine wisdom which we can, therefore, certainly comprehend (in a practical sense)."

Strauss: Not "certainly," "well comprehend." The German _____ - which we can well comprehend in a practical intent, i.e. we could never comprehend it as a theoretical proposition. Yes?

Reader: "2) in its mystical (supernatural) end in the order of efficient causes of which we comprehend nothing."

Strauss: "Comprehend nothing" was underlined by Kant. He made it quite clear. And "well" in the first section was also underlined. Yes?

Reader: "3) in the unnatural (perverted) end of all things for which we ourselves are responsible in that we misunderstand the ultimate purpose. The first of these possibilities has just been discussed and now the two remaining ones will follow."

Strauss: So, in other words, the natural end of all things is the end corresponding to the heroic belief in a good end, i.e. the end of all things is that which the philosophy of history has in mind. This has been cleared up sufficiently for the present purpose and now we have to consider only the alternatives: the mystical and the counter-natural or unnatural view.

Kant speaks, then, first of the supernatural or mystical end of all things. Let us read the next section.

Reader: "In the Apocalypse, "An angel lifted up his hand to heaven, And sware by him that liveth forever and ever, who created heaven, etc.: that there should be time no longer." If one does not assume that this angel "with his voice of seven thunders" desired to cry out nonsense, then he must have meant with these words"

Strauss: You see, he "must have meant." Yes?

Reader: "that henceforeth there should be no change; . . . the latter is brought into one and the same temporal series with the former, and this is self-contradictory."

Strauss: The key point: if no time, then no change. That seems to be a matter of course. We will come across the difficulty very soon.

Kant draws a further conclusion in the next paragraph. If no time, something else. Go on.

Reader: "But we also say that we conceive a duration as infinite In these circumstances then nothing else remains for reason except to visualize a variation that progresses into the infinite (in time)"

Strauss: "A change" would be a better translation making it quite clear."

Reader: "a change that progresses into the infinite (in time) . . . (the homo noumenon, "whose change takes place in heaven") would not be subjected at all to temporal change."

Strauss: Here we have another case where - I am embarrassed by the fact that I do not know the proper translation for the German word gesinnung which he translates by disposition. The least one would have to do is to add "moral" disposition. But that is, perhaps, too weak. "The intention" might be a better translation.

Max Weber made a distinction between two kinds of morality: a morality of responsibility and morality of gesinnung. I believe that in that case the English translators say "intention." Don't they? You must have read Max Weber when you went to college here at the University of Chicago. So let us say, then, "intention."

Kant has, then, first said "If no time, no change." Then he said, "If no time, no end," which is a particularly striking kind of change.

But, for practical intent, there is an infinite, constant change after that. There is an inifinite progress - a change for the better - without change of the intent. That is to say that assuming I am a man of good intention, this good intention never changes and to that extent I am transtemporal. But since I progressed from an inferior state to a higher state, I do undergo a change. How to figure this difficulty out is very, very hard. And surely one can understand from this point of view (since this is so complicated) that Kant should have been inclined in favor of the frankly temporalistic philosophy of history where this difficulty does not arise because all is change in time, rather than the doctrine of the immortality of the soul where he is saddled with the question of how to understand a change - a progress, a temporal process - which yet is not to be a temporal process.

I think that at this point it is indispensable for us to read Kant's official statement on the immortality of the sould in the Critique of Practical Reason.

Reader: "The immortality of the soul and the postulate of pure, practical reason: The achievement of the highest good in the world is the necessary object of the will determinable by the moral law. In such a will, however, the complete fitness of intentions to the moral law is the supreme condition of the highest good. This fitness, therefore, must be just as possible as its object because it is contained in the command that requires us to promote the latter. But the complete fitness of the will to the moral law is holiness which is a perfection of which no

rational being in the world of sense is at any time capable. But since it is required as practically necessary it can be found only in an endless progress to that complete fitness. On principles of pure, practical reason it is necessary to assume such a practical progress as the real object of our will."

Strauss: Is this thought clear? We cannot possibly be holy as God is holy in finite time. But we can have a maximum approximation to holiness in infinite time and that means after death because our worldly time is surely finite. Yes?

Reader: "This infinite progress is possible, however, only under the presupposition of an infinitely enduring existence and personality of the same rational being. This is called the immortality of the soul. Thus the highest good is practically possible only on the supposition of the immortality of the soul and the latter - as inseparably bound to the moral law - is a postulate of pure, practical reason. From that postulate of pure, practical reason I understand a theoretical proposition which is not, as such, demonstrable, but which is an inseparable corollary of an a priori unconditionally valid practical law. The thesis of the moral destiny of our nature is that it is able only in an infinite progress toward complete fitness to the moral law, is of great use not merely for the present purpose of supplementing the impotence of speculative reason, but also with respect to religion."

Strauss: The point here is that the postulate of pure practical reason regarding the immortality of the soul has to do with an infinite progress after this life. That is to say, an infinite change and, hence, a temporal phenomenon in a fundamentally transtemporal existence. This difficulty would be resolved, of course, by the abandonment of the immortality of the soul and by finding the substitute for it - the immortality of the soul - in the philosophy of history. I think that this thought has - in terms of votes - won out after Kant. Would you not admit this? That in terms of sheer voting power it has won out.

Student: I don't take polls.

Strauss: Nor do I. We will proceed in a wholly unscientific manner. But still we are not forbidden to use our heads. Would you not agree?

Student: Yes. I would.

Strauss: But all these changes which sociologists can establish in a way which seems to kill any discussion you might have, say, regarding the death of God which is also such a statistical problem.

Student: Then you can say that it is true of theology.

Strauss: Certainly. I observed this one generation ago in the German universities which always had one faculty called the theological faculty be it Protestant or Catholic - that depended upon the part of the country. But then the new universities emerged at the end of the second World War and after it. They

had no longer a theological faculty, but brought in a social science faculty. This was another sign of the times. Of course these sociological observations must be made, no doubt. But they cannot be understood if one does not go into the theoretical reasons, into the theoretical justifications, perhaps into the ideological justifications of these changes. And here when we study Kant - especially this writing - we see one of these reasons. Kant, still concerned with the question of the immortality of the sole, is yet unable to give any proper account of this temporal/transtemporal character of life after death, a difficulty which, to repeat, disappears if you vote in favor of the philosophy of history. It doesn't matter if it is the Kantian or Hegelian or any other because here we never leave the temporal sphere.

Let us turn to the next page where Kant makes this still more clear

Reader: "Only endless progress from lower to higher stages of moral perfection is possible to a rational, but finite being."

Strauss: I am sorry. We cannot read the rest. I meant in the End of All Things, page 78.

Reader: "But that some time a moment will make its appearance when all change - and with it time itself - will cease is a notion that revolts our imagination. Then, of course, the whole of nature, as it were, will grow rigid and petrified; then the final thought, the last feelings will remain stationary in the thinking subject and ever the same without variation. For a creature which can be conscious of its existence and the magnitude of it (viewed as a duration) in time only, such a life, if, indeed, it may be called life, must seem equivalent to annihilation, because in order to fancy itself in such a situation the creature comprehends a process of reflection"

Strauss: "Of thinking" would be a better translation. Thinking contains reflection.

Reader: "But thinking contains a process of reflection which itself can only occur in time."

Strauss: In other words, God would not, strictly speaking, think or as Kant put it, God's understanding is intuitive understanding, not implying reflection, not discursive.

Reader: "Hence the inhabitants of the other world, according to their dwelling place (heaven or hell), are presented as singing forever and ever the same song, either their hallelujah, or eternally doleful notes; in this way the total absence of all change is meant to be indicated in their state."

Strauss: Singing, of course, is a temporal process. Nevertheless you can symbolically present nonchange by saying, "Singing, but singing always the same." That is the point. But you must, of course, take it as symbolic and not literal.

The cessation of all change (the point which Kant makes here) is wholly unintelligible to us. Yet, in a way, we have to assert it on practical grounds.

Now the difficulty. Up to now there is no great difficulty to which Kant points. Now, in the next paragraph, there is one to which he himself points.

Reader: "However much this Idea transcends our cognitive capacity . . . a contentment which he can think only by thinking that the ultimate purpose will some time finally be reached."

Strauss: So, in other words, a devastating criticism of the notion of progress. Hegel's criticism of Kant later. To exemplify it by a simple example, perpetual peace as we will hear next time, is an idea of reason which means that it is a goal of an infinite progress. But if it is a goal of infinite progress, that of course means that perpetual peace will never be achieved actually, only in infinite time which means never. I.e. you can speak of perpetual peace in the Kantian sense only if you are aware that you admit at the same time perpetual war. You know, there may be a little bit less of war next time if you are willing to believe that, but there will always be war around. Perhaps it is possible to abolish war between nations, but surely not war within nations or within families or within the individual. This, then, is the difficulty which Kant faces, but from which he does not draw the conclusion that, hence, there is something wrong with the idea of infinite progress, but that people give in and abandon the idea of progress unreasonably. That is what he says in the next paragraph.

Reader: "Now as a result the speculative man becomes entangled in mysticism where his reason does not understand itself and what it wants, and rather prefers to dote on the beyond than to confine itself within the bounds of this world, as is fitting for an intellectual inhabitant of a sensible world."

Strauss: In other words, the way men take out is mysticism as Kant understands mysticism which means the belief that men can arrive at a final state which is something like the nothingness of which Lao Tzu speaks and other mystics, pantheists and even Spinoza as Kant seems to believe. So this is the mystical end of all things which is irrational.

In the sequel Kant speaks of the third alternative which is the unnatural end of all things. It is only in this section that Christianity becomes the theme. There is Christian mysticism, but Kant speaks here not of Christian mysticism, but of Indian mysticism. What is the point here regarding the unnatural end of all things?

Kant begins with an observation regarding the questionable character of human wisdom especially in men's attempts to make religion in a whole people pure and, at the same time, powerful. This is a temptation, as it were which men may have - to have in a whole people religion at the same time pure and powerful.

Let us continue on page 80, the second paragraph.

Reader: "Nevertheless, if, for once, these trials have finally succeeded . . . since it remains always uncertain what the issue may be according to the course of nature."

Strauss: So Kant now takes up the question of men's attempts to make religion in a whole people pure and at the same time powerful. He observes that in this regard a great change has taken place in our time meaning in the 18th century. Religion is now illuminated by practical reason more than it ever was. And these people who have no official standing -they are not clergymen, but rather these private men of whom he spoke: scholars (one must not speak of intellectuals when discussing a Kantian thought). So, in other words, we are here confronted with something of which Kant had spoken before in different words, and that is the natural end of all things - the progress, the greatest possible betterment, the beginning of a conscious movement towards what this heroic belief in a good end has in mind.

In the immediate sequel, we come to a crucial point.

Reader: "For we may be as incredulous as we wish, yet where it is absolutely impossible to see in advance with certainty the success that results from positive means which are accepted according to all human wisdom (which, if it deserves its name, must move solely toward morality), we must still give credence to a concurrence of divine wisdom with the course of nature in a practical sense, if we do not prefer to relinquish our ultimate purpose altogether."

Strauss: That is the key statement in this essay about the moral basis of the philosophy of history, of a belief in the meaningfulness of history. That is to say, a belief that history is a movement from the inferior to the superior, from the bad to the good. We are morally obliged to work for that progress. We cannot do that with the necessary conviction if we do not believe that this progress is supported by providence. To that extent, the philosophy of history is demanded by morality - not only our outlook for the future (our hope for the future), but the systematic presentation of that outlook in a philosophy of history is itself a moral duty. Go on.

Reader: "To be sure, people will object. Often it has been said that the present plan is the best; it is the one according to which things must endure for now and ever more; now it is a condition for eternity. 'Whoever (according to this concept) is good, is always good, and whoever (contrary to it) is evil, is always evil': exactly as if eternity, and with it, the end of all things could already be entered now. And yet, since that time, continually new schemes have been introduced, among which the newest was often only the revival of an old one."

Strauss: In other words, this is the old-fashioned view: there will be no progress, but men always make plans which are well-intentioned and which may be useful up to a point, but they will not radically change the human condition. This is based on a verse from the Revelations. Go on.

Reader: "And henceforward also there will be no lack of more final projects.

I am so very conscious of my inability to make a new and successful attempt in this, lacking as I do any great inventive faculty

for it, that I prefer to counsel people to leave matters just as they last stood and as they had, throughout almost a generation, proved bearable in their consequences."

Strauss: In other words, people make objections to the present plan, to the plan of an enlightened Christianity - a Christianity illuminated by pure practical reason. And this plan, says Kant, has proved to be bearable (which is an understatement from his point of view) for almost a generation. What the dates are which he has in mind is hard to say. He may be a little bit evasive because he may mean the period of Frederick the Great with his great tolerance as distinguished from the intolerance of Frederick's successor. That is possible.

Now Kant becomes a little bit more explicit in the sequel. I will state this as follows. Kant begins to speak in the next paragraph of the amiability of lovability of Christianity. So the question is obviously - in this third part - concerning Christianity, the lovability of Christianity. And Kant here makes a seemingly shocking concession from the point of view of his moral philosophy. You remember what he said about the categoric imperative and the only proper human response to it - respect for the law. And now Kant says, "Respect for the law, which I have praised so highly in the moral writings proper, is not enough. We need, too, a presentation of what we ought to do which is to love the law and not merely respect it. And that lovable presentation is Christianity."

At this point, however, the cloven hoof comes out. This amiability is incompatible with authority, i.e. if Christianity presents itself as based on authority or as being authoritative, then it ceases to be lovable. There cannot be a command to love Christianity or to love Jesus Christ because then it at once ceases to be amiable. The founder of Christianity is not a law-giver, a commander, but a philanthropist - a friend of human beings who does not claim any authority. And, in particular, he does not threaten men with punishmen because that would immediately soil the pure motivation of the moral will because it would be consideration of fear of punishment and not respect for the law which would induce men to act properly. Of course, the same is true of rewards. The rewards promised by Christianity cannot be understood as rewards inducing men to act morally. Otherwise we would be acting immorally if we were acting well with the thought of rewards.

Let us turn to page 84, the second paragraph.

Reader: "That is the moral worthiness of love which Christianity carries within itself"

Strauss: "Worthiness of love." "Amiability" or "lovability" would be better.

Reader: "which still glimmers through the many constraints appended to it"

Strauss: Coercion.

Reader: "coercion appended to it with the very frequent change of opinions. It has preserved Christianity itself in the face of the aversion which it otherwise would have encountered, and (what is rmarkable) this lovability shows itself in a light only so much the brighter at the time of the greatest enlightenment which ever was among men."

Strauss: Which was that time which was "the time of the greatest enlightement that ever was among men?"

Student: About 1784.

Strauss: Yes, or 1794 for that matter. So the lovability of Christianity appears most clearly in our most enlightened age, i.e. the highest triumph of Christianity at a time when Christianity is almost completely devoid - apart from its early spirit - from any authority. So the victory of Christianity goes along with its abandonment of any claim to authority. Kant even says later, "this liberal way of thinking." Of course, "liberal" does not mean in Kant what it means today in this country today, especially where it can go together with the greatest license, I believe, imaginable. Kant, of course, thought very highly of the moral law. Still, "liberal" here is defined equally remotely from "servile mentality" and from "license." But the key point is no authority.

Let us not forget - as you may have forgotten - what is the counternatural possibility which Kant is discussing here in the last few pages? That we find alluded to in the last paragraph.

Reader: "Should Christianity once reach the point where it ceases to be worthy of love . . . and the (perverse) end of all things (in a moral point of view) would come to pass."

Strauss: So, in other words, it seems at first glance that if Christianity should cease to be lovable - and this would be the consequence if it were armed with authority - this would be the Antichrist, the perversion of Christianity, the unnatural end of all things.

But the age of the Antichrist, Kant says, will last only a short time. So this won't be the end. Or should it be the end? I think that what Kant alludes to is a perversion of Christianity at the end of history. So the age of the Antichrist might be short, meaning that the world comes to an end, but the end would then be an antiChristian end. That is the third alternative discussed by Kant.

I think that we must not take this writing too seriously in what it asserts because Kant plays here with ideas of reason as he says, but only because of the truly Kantian implications. What he indicates about the heroic belief in the good end as a moral duty, and matters related to that.

Only if Christianity complies with the demands of morality or moral reason as Kant has set them forth, i.e. with the demand for self-legislation, autonomy and not heteronomy - subject, that is to a law which does not originate in your own reason, but rather only in divine reason. This is a radical change in

Christianity which Kant must demand under these conditions, a Christianity within the limits of pure reason. Kant is willing to call himself a Christian, but only under these conditions.

Next time we will come to subjects more immediately recognizable as subjects of a political science seminar. We will turn to Kant's writing on Perpetual Peace or, as one could almost say, on United Nations.

Seminar on Kant: Session XIV
May 18, 1967

There is one technical point which may have been my fault. I thought that I had assigned for today's meeting the supplements as distinguished from the appendices. How did you understand me, Mr. ____?

Student: inaudible

Strauss: I will not hold it against you Mr. _____.

Only a few points. Regarding the title, you translated it "Toward Eternal Peace." This is possible, but it is not the most natural understanding of "Zum." For example, if someone were to write an article on Kant's troubles with the Prussian censor and would not mean to exhaust the subject. He has discovered a new piece of evidence or something of this kind. Then he would very well say in German "Zum Kant's ." That is, concerning, or in reference to. But this is a trivial point.

The most serious point that you make is that these imperatives are hypothetical. But you mention at least one case where the basis of Kant's formulation is the dignity of man which is surely categorical and not hypothetical. So we will take this up. You may have mistaken the fact that Kant cannot present these articles of perpetual peace for the preliminary and the definitive ones as categorically valid now. Because what can the citizens do? Nothing. And even the governments might have very good reasons in some cases, at any rate, to say, "We cannot stop that in an entirely hostile world." That you may have mistaken for hypothetical.

Then you refer to the alternative policy which Kant discusses, namely aggrandizement. You spoke in this connection of power, the motivation being what? I mean an intelligent, old-fashioned or, for that matter, present day statesman. What would he say against Kant's point in terms of power?

Student: The only argument I can think of is that we seek power solely with a view to exercising it to the benefit of the citizens.

Strauss: Yes. He surely would speak in this way today. That we cannot help it. We have to be on our guard. We don't know what our potential enemies plan. So we might be compelled sometimes to take preventive actions.

But that is not quite the point which Kant meant. Kant uses a somewhat different term and this throws light upon our present way of thinking and speaking. He speaks of "glory," doesn't he? So, in other words, in this view the glory of a state consists in expanding and in subjugating neighbors. Here there is not the excuse that we cannot help it. Rather, it is glorious in itself. That is something very different. May I say that in general in the present-day use of powere where power is used

in such an innocent way, is a relatively recent thing. The older view was, rather, a very positive one. Then it was not power, but glory. When, for example, Thucydides speaks of this kind of problem he calls this view which we now have in regard to power, a concern with security or fear. That is one thing. But the motive of imperial Athens is, of course, not mere fear - it might have been at the beginning when they started - but the main motives are profit and glory.

The peculiar hypocrisy of modern times shows itself in the forgetting about glory as a motive of society and pushing them back to that innocent thing, power. Power sounds innocent because whether you are concerned with moral or nohmoral purposes in both cases you need power. Therefore, it is a neutral means which can be used for good and for bad ends. Therefore, if we forget about the ends we have this neutral view of power which is found so frequently today.

I have heard more than once, "Power is the subject of political science." Period. Just as wealth is the subject of economics. But it is a very complicated thing. Power may mean authority - political, legal authority - which is not the same as the meaning of power generally used by us. And so on. So let us watch this terminology.

The last point I want to make is that Kant says that states are now in the state of nature, the state of war. The state of war does not mean that they are engaged always in actual hostilities. This is an older view, isn't it? I mean, that is exactly what Hobbes means when he says that all men are by nature in a state of war which does not mean that they are actually actively engaged in warfare, but rather that there is no possibility of a legal, peaceful settlement of their conflict because there is noone who is superior who can settle it.

Now I would like to return to Mr. _____'s paper. I have two points. Mr. ____ recognizes the strange transition in the essay, The End of All Things. Namely, Kant speaks first of the immortality of the individual soul. The body of the essay, however, deals with the end of all things considered from the apocalyptic point of view. What happens to the soul between death and the general apocalypse is unclear.

The other point is on page 3. "The fate of the soul was never a speculative issue. It was always a practical principle which provided the necessary foundation for the moral law." That is wrong. The moral law has no foundation outside of itself. But it is derivative from the moral law. Otherwise, the paper was quite satisfactory.

Now let us turn to our assignment. In his charmingly ironic preface Kant alludes, as has become clear from Mr. ___'s report, to the issue of theory and practice. He refers here to the satirical inscription on the shingles of a Dutch innkeeper to the eternal peace, and the picture was a graveyard.

I happen to know that in _____, a great, famous popular writer of modern science in the 18th century he wrote the eulogy of Leibniz in the _____, and there he mentions

that Leibniz edited a book called, _____, and takes it for granted - as did Leibniz before him - that the nations have no other laws between them than those which it pleases them to make. Leibniz had studied various peace treaties, and confesses that so many peace treaties so frequently renewed among the same nations are a disgrace for these nations. And he approves with pain the inscription of a Dutch merchant in which he had inscribed the motto "Eternal Peace" around the picture of a cemetary.

Now what is the key point of the joke which Kant makes in this introduction? That did not become quite clear from Mr. ____'s paper. The supercilious man of business looks down with contempt upon such things as Kant's proposals regarding perpetual peace. Kant says, "Very well, if you despise it so much - if you regard it as irrelevant and hence harmless - then let me alone." That is the joke which Kant makes here.

Now let us come to the preliminary articles. Let us first read the first preliminary article.

Reader: "1. 'No Treaty of Peace Shall Be Held Valid In Which There Is Tacitly Reserved Matter for a Future War."

Strauss: I think that is clear because once you do that you are already preparing for the next war. Now in this statement - please read line 5, page 86 (Perpetual Peace in Kant On History, ed. Lewis White Beck).

Reader: "When one or both parties to a treaty of peace, being too exhausted to continue warring with each other, make a tacit reservation in regard to old claims to be elaborated only at some more favorable opportunity in the future, the treaty is made in bad faith, and we have an artifice worthy of the casuistry of a Jesuit.. Considered by itself, it is beneath the dignity of a sovereign, just as the readiness to indulge in this kind of reasoning is unworthy of the dignity of his minister."

Strauss: So that is the reply of Kant to that minister who looks down upon him. The man who says, "I know better" has no sense of the dignity of his office.

What is the next article, then?

Reader: "Any State of Whatever Extent Shall Never Pass Under the Dominion of Another State, Whether by Inheritance, Exchange, Purchase or Donation."

Strauss: This was a very popular thing in absolutist Germany. But not only there. Think of the wars of succession - of the Spanish succession, of the Austrian succession - which could never have happened if this principle had been achknowledged. The point here is that a state is not the soil of the state, but a society of human beings. If they are purchased, given away, sold or whatever, then human beings are treated as things and not as persons and that is an immoral thing. So this is definitely a direct consequence of the categorical imperative.

Now the next point.

Reader: "Standing Armies Shall in Time Be Totally Abolished."

Strauss: "Standing armies" means here mercenary armies as we see from the sequel. Kant has nothing against citizen soldiers. On the contrary, he recommends these in this very section. Let us read only one half sentence here which is in the middle of this statement.

Reader: "Add to this that to pay men to kill or to be killed seems to entail using them as mere machines and tools in the hand of another (the state), and this is hardly compatible with the rights of mankind in our own person."

Strauss: Why does he use these mitigating expressions "hardly" and "seems?" It still shows, in other words, the connection.

Then the next point is not revealing of any fundamental principles so we can skip it. But it is clear that insofar as public debts are necessary for waging war and carrying public debts for that purpose should be forbidden.

The next point is politically much more interesting. Point 5.

Reader: "No State Shall by Force Interfere with the Constitution or Government of Another State."

For what is there to authorize it to do so? The offense . . . But so long as the internal dissension has not come to this critical point"

Strauss: It should read "has not yet been decided." Because as long as this critical point has not yet been decided . . ."

Reader: "such intereference by foreign powers would infringe on the rights of an independent people struggling with its internal disease; hence it would itself be an offense and would render the autonomy of all states insecure."

Strauss: This question of the autonomy of all states which is the basic premise of the whole thing we will discuss later.

Here only one point. Think of the American Civil War of which Kant could not know. Think of the attempts of the English government to take the side of the Confederacy against the Washington government would be an example. According to your translation the British, if they had this intention which is not certain, would have acted correctly, but according to the German original they tried to interfere before the struggle was decided. Therefore, that was not right.

This is a long, long question. The question of the rights of intervention of one nation in the affairs of another state. Do you know anything about the history of this concept? Well, generally speaking, in the premodern view intervention was, of course, admitted. Think of a barbarian, bestial tyrant who keeps down a city. If the neighboring cities not out of fear for their own security, but just for reasons of humanity or justice, intervene that is very good. That was generally the classical, traditional view.

The other view we can call the modern view. It was, of course, connected with the modern notion of the autonomy of the states, the modern notions of sovereignty and, to that extent, going back to men like Hobbes. But the immediate origin was what happened on this continent after the conquest by the Spaniards. This conquest was based, according to some official theory, on the right of Christians to conquer and Christianize pagans. And the Spaniards - not all of them, of course, but only the most powerful and vigorous men - behaved in a bestial manner in Mexico and Peru. And then some Catholic writers started this line: that there was no right on the basis of natural right nor on the basis of divine right to Christianize men by force. Can you help me remember the names of some of these writers? Their works were edited in the Carnegie Classics of International Law. These were then integrated into doctrines of an entirely different origin like the Bodin-Hobbian doctrine which asserted the autonomy of states radically.

There is a very interesting discussion of this in Croce's book, The Right of War and Peace, Book II, Chapter XX in which he gives evidence of the older view which permitted intervention. Croce, if I remember well, leans towards this older view which permits wars of civilization which are rejected by the modern view.

Now the next article.

Reader: "No State Shall, during War, Permit Such Acts of Hostility Which Would Make Mutual Confidence in the Subsequent Peace Impossible: Such Are the Employment of Assassins, Poisoners, Breach of Capitulation, and Incitement to Treason in the Opposing State."

Strauss: "Etc.," Kant says. So the list was not meant to be complete. Go on.

Reader: "These are dishonorable stratagems . . . (as if given by a so-called 'judgment of God') decides on which side justice lies."

Strauss: Here you see the difference between these Spanish Dominicans (I believe that they were Dominicans) and the Hobbian view. The older view is, of course, that there can be a just war. It can be injust on both sides, but there also can be justice on one side. Whereas, the modern view which was first stated by Hobbes is that it is impossible to call any war just because only when there is an authority recognized by both sides can there be the possibility of distinguishing between justice and injustice. Therefore there cannot be any punitive war. You know that this has been changed since the Nuremberg trials and to some extent already in the Versailles treaty. That one party to the conflict can be just and the other party unjust. Today that has become the accepted position. But that is a long question.

Let us go on.

Reader: "But between states no punitive war is conceivable, because there is no relation between them of master and servant.

Strauss: That should be "of a superior to the subject." They are only enemies and not superiors and subjects. Whenever there is punishment there is a superior, say the judge acting for the government confronted with the subject, the defendent. Go on.

Reader: "It follows that a war of extermination, in which the destruction of both parties . . . to the undoing of the very spirit of peace.

Strauss: What about the use of spies? Is this to be counted amongs the "etc." in the title of this article?

Reader: It would have to be.

Strauss: Yes. Because in war you need spies to find out whether the enemy is preparing offenses. They have to do all sorts of things. For example, they may look like peaceful inhabitants of the country on which they are spying. And the question is whether you can stop that at the end of the war. But Kant, I think, seems to exclude the use of spies. This would lead him into trouble from the point of view of conscientious generals, I believe.

In the long discussion at the end of this section Kant speaks of a question of natural law - that is to say, of moral law - and he makes clear the status of the preceding laws. Some are simply laws which forbid and some are strict laws which demand immediate abolition, like number 6. And with others it is legitimate to postpone their being put into practice. So there is no question that these are moral laws for Kant.

It is, however, clear that private citizens cannot do anything about these laws. And it is clear, too, that governments cannot be morally condemned in all cases given the present state of affairs in 1785 or 1967.

Now we turn to the definite part of the work. These preliminary points are only preparatory. Page 92. Read this introduction.

Reader: "Containing the Definitive Articles"

The state of peace among men living side by side is not the natural state . . . from whom he demands this security, as an enemy."

Strauss: And the beginning of the note.

Reader: "We ordinarily assume that no one may act inimically toward another except when he has been actively injured by the other. This is quite correct if both are under civil law, for, by entering into such a state, they afford each other the r e-quisite security through the sovereign which has power over both."

Strauss: That is the ordinary view and it is attacked by Kant. A man hurts me, violates me, if he refuses to enter civil society because I have no guarantee against his potential hostility if we are not both subject to authority. This is also a Hobbian point of view.

Kant, however, extends that. It is not only for the entering civil society, but also for the states entering a world federation. The possibility arises here (not mentioned by Kant) that there might be a war to end all wars by forcing all states into a world confederation. It is an interesting possiblity because it would be likely to be self-defeating.

Now Kant gives the conditions which are not fulfilled. The other article stated before could be fulfilled even now, let us say in 1785 according to Kant. But the others require great changes. They require, in a way, a revolution all over Europe as you see from the first definitive article.

Reader: "The Civil Constitution of Every State should be Republican."

Strauss: It ought to be republican. It is an "ought." Why is this so? Why must is be republican?

Reader: "The only constitution which derives from the idea of the original compact, and on which all juridical legislation of a people must be based, is the republican. This constitution is established, firstly, by principles of the freedom of the members of a society (as men); secondly, by principles of dependence of all upon a single common legislation (as subjects); and, thirdly by the law of their equality (as citizens). The republican constitution, therefore, is, with respect to law, the one which is the original basis of every form of civil constitution."

Strauss: This is what right demands. So as long as states are not republican they are fundamentally against right.

Now the next one?

Reader: "The republican constitution, besides the purity of its origin (having sprung from the pure source of the concept of law), also gives a favorable prospect for the desired consequence, i.e., perpetual peace."

Strauss: Kant develops then at some length that if the people have the say regarding war, there will be no war because they are the ones who will suffer if there is a war. But if some prince or princeling in his castle surrounded by his courtiers and mistresses and completely separated from the people and from their suffering, he doesn't mind waging war.

We have some experiences which Kant could not have at that time. But even without these experiences a great American statesman has written a criticism probably without knowing Kant's writing. Do you know where this question is disucussed in a famous American document? The Federalist Papers. Hamilton shows in one of the first papers - on the basis of history - that republics can be as warlike as monarchies. This fact which Kant mentions is not entirely irrelevant, but it does not settle the issue.

Student: He was surely overlooking what the French had just been doing.

Strauss: Or he has looked at it as some people look at Communist conquests. There were people who said in the Second World War and after that the Communist governments are peaceful and would never do such wicked things as would other nations.

Student: There is also another possibility that he overlooked - that a democracy may be able to carry on a war which is far away without appreciable burdens on the people at home.

Strauss: You can always say that examples from antiquity are not valid because they were not true democracies having so many slaves. But, still, this is not very pertinent. The wars waged, say, by Athens were waged by the citizen body, i.e. not by slaves. They were very warlike and also engaged in all kinds of bestial things. There is surely no reason why a populous should not get wild. I mean, disregarding for the moment the possibility of a just and sensible war, there is not any reason for this. But Kant probably looked at the subjects whom he knew who were all very peaceful people because Russian at that time had no universal military service. They were the scum of the country. How did Wellington put it? "The scum of the earth enlisted for drink." So these harmless artisans and peasants were not warlike. But at the moment they became citizens things looked different.

These final points which Kant makes in saying what a republican type governemtn means, he will speak of more in the sequel. He speaks again of freedom. A just constitution is constructed according to principles of freedom, of the members of society as human beings. We have heard this before in one of the writings we have read here, but I think we should now discuss a parallel which is a more systematic statement in his Metaphysics of Morals. And there is a heading: "The Innate Right is only a Single One." There is only a single inborn right and that is freedom. Freedom i.e. independence of any other's coercing arbitrariness. To the extent that that freedom can coexist with the freedom of everybody else according to a universal law. This is the only original right belonging to every man by virtue of his being a human being.

To this freedom belongs the right to do that against others which in itself does not lessen what belongs to them provided that they do not accept it. For example, to communicate to them one's thoughts, to tell them something, to promise them something whether true and sincerely or untrue and insincerely. Because it depends entirely upon them whether they wish to believe him or not. Kant makes clear in the sequel, for example, that cheating, strictly understood, is a violation, but if I promise the other something without him giving me anything and never meaning to give it to me, that is my perfect right.

The interesting point is this. Kant is very strict regarding lying, even regarding white lies. So we are, by duty, never to lie. But we have the right to lie, i.e. we cannot be coerced to say the truth. That is the specific meaning of "right" in Kant.

Shortly after this remarkable passage follows: Why is ethics ordinarily called "the doctrine of duties" and not also "the doctrine of rights?" No one prior to Kant raised that question. But now the emphasis has shifted so much to the rights that the

question is: Why should not ethics be the doctrine of rights at least as much as the doctrine of duty? That is interesting.

You can easily see what this pronouncement of Kant means because if this right to lie did not exist then it would be possible for the government to coerce people to say the truth. What would this mean? Severe censorship of every conversation however harmless. So if you would have liberty you must grant quite a few rights which are not compatible with morality strictly understood.

If we have some familiarity with earlier thought we are, of course, surprised time and again how lax the now ruling principles are. This laxity has one and only one justification - freedom.

As for this notion of freedom, this concept has never been properly studied. Because when speaking of freedom we use the word which was popular in all times, very few people are of any strictness. Freedom was the key word in Athens and in Sparta and in Rome, and everywhere in the world so to speak. But what did it mean? The word freedom has undergone many changes. One of the most important documents for understanding the issue of freedom is Montesquieu's Spirit of Laws. I will mention here only one point. This is a very difficult, very subtle book. Montesquieu's book begins with the suggestion rather than the assertion that the highest principle of civil society is virtue. This is the old-fashioned view of Plato and Aristotle and many others. But this view had become questionable in modern times when self-preservation had become the key so much so that Locke, for example, could say, "Civil government has nothing to do with virtue and rights of the citizens." Montesquieu repeats this assertion with uninteresting modifications, and he repeats it in order to lead away from it.

Later on, roughly in Book XI, he speaks of a principle different from virtue and that he calls freedom. The most impressive embodiment of this freedom is the British constitution as he understood it. England is a model country for Montesquieu. Whether he means it literally or in order to induce the French to move away from the then ruling authoritarianism is not an important question. But England has another character apart from being a free country. He calls England a republic, although it was officially - then as now - a kingdom. But he saw quite well that the England of the 18th century was not a monarchy in the sense in which France was a monarchy. England has this quality of being a republic and being free. And it is a special kind of republic. It is, of course, not like Sparta. It is a commercial republic. And what is the characteristic of commercial societies? I will read to you only one passage.

Book XX, Chapter I. "Commerce heals destructive prejudices. And this is almost the general rule. Wherever there are gentle manners, there is commerce, and wherever there is commerce there are gentle manners. One should not, therefore, be surprised if our manners are less ferocious than they were before. The knowledge of the manners of all nations has penetrated everywhere. One has compared them among themselves and great good has resulted therefrom. One can say that the laws of commerce" - meaning the laws regulating commerce as well as the laws commerce obeys (laws

not laid down by any legislature) -"affect the manners for the same reason as why these same laws ruin manners."

Manners here is, of course, in the French _____ which means also morals. Commerce corrupts the pure morals. This was, of course, the subject of Plato's complaints.

"It polishes and makes gentle the barbaric manners as we see every day."

So, in other words, we have an increase in human kindess at the price of considerable corruption. Montesquieu is willing to pay the price. That is, at least, my understanding of it.

There is a somewhat later statement by someone who knew the 18th century very well - Edmund Burke. He speaks of the new morality which had exploded at that time in France. Virtue which the French called _____ - humanity - is appealed to at the price of the severe virtues meaning the virtues which restrain the appetite.

Such a change has taken place in the course of the last few hundred years. We would not notice it any more than we notice the air which we breathe, if we do not engage in some reading of great books - or even less great books - simply belonging to an older time.

In Kant it is very remarkable. Kant appears at first glance as the severest moralist among the philosophers. Yet he is closely connected with this movement toward less strict manners which was so powerful in his century and in the centuries following him. Yes?

Student: Are you suggesting that Kant is conscious of being part of that movement?

Strauss: To some extent how could he fail to be so? You see, the point is this: There was always understood in a practical manner that you cannot forbid by legislation all kinds of vices. The most famous example, of course, is prostitution which was always more or less tolerated although regarded as very wrong. But people did these kinds of things in a practical manner. Being here strict and there less strict according to circumstances.

But what happened in the modern centuries was that one wanted to find a principle which would allow you to draw a hard and fast, universally valid line between what belongs and what does not belong to this fear of civil legislation.

In the moment you say - like Locke for example - that virtue and rights are of no concern to the civil lawgiver, his only conern is of keeping peace. And, of course, Hobbes also implies this. That is the Kantian view, only Kant tries to give it a more fundamental basis by divorcing this fear of the civil legislator from self-preservation and basing it on freedom. But, therefore, his freedom must include all kinds of things like lying, for example.

Student: He doesn't seem to regard the old virtues as virtues.

Strauss: In a way he does, but this part of the moral law which has to do with virtues is, in a way, the less pressing part. The most pressing part is what you may or may not do to other human beings. That is to say, conflict, i.e. peace. And, therefore in the early statement which I read at the beginning of the course when Kant says, "Rousseau has brought me into right shape," namely, he has made him recognize the supremacy of morality-Kant speaks in the very same context of the rights of humanity. That is the point. This morality is primarily concerned with the rights of humanity rather than with morality in the full sense, i.e. that by which you do not directly harm another.

Kant, even in his most libertine moods, was a man of extreme rigorousness compared with what is now accepted as tolerable. I think I do not have to labor that point. What Mr. ____ said last time that the examples which are most well known are indelicate and, therefore, one should not speak about that. Is that what you meant? You said last time that one should refrain from using indelicate examples, but unfortunately indelicate examples are the most striking ones when you speak of this matter.

Let us now return to the point under discussion. The civil constitution in every state ought to be republican. This sounds quite radical, but Kant makes it clear in the sequel that republican constitutions have nothing to do with democracy, God forbid. Republicanism is a certain spirit of constitution opposed to the despotic spirit. So it has nothing to do with the form of government strictly understood. Therefore an absolute monarchy may rule in a republican spirit just as a democracy may be despotic. For example, if, like Frederick the Great according to Kant's presentation elsewhere, considers in every case of laying down the law whether the people could have legislated it themselves given sufficient information, then it is right. But he, nevertheless, was the sole legislator. He would have come into trouble, of course, because in Frederick's famous code of laws the hereditary nobility with all its great privileges was firmly entrenched and which, according to Kant's notion, no people would ever do.

Let us [illegible] the second paragraph, page 96.

Reader: "Every government which is not representative is properly formless, the legislator as little capable of being united in the same person with the executor of his will just as little as the universal of the major premise in a syllogism can also be the subsumption of the particular under the universal in the minor."

Strauss: So strictly speaking republican government means representative government. But never something like direct democracy. That is wholly extreme. Yes?

Reader: "Although an aristocracy and autocracy are defective inasmuch as they are susceptible of the vice here mentioned, they nevertheless contain the possibility of representative

administration. So far, at least, is Frederick II insinuated when he declared himself the first servant of the state."

Strauss: In other words, that he himself is the first servant of the state.

Reader: "Whereas a democracy renders the representative system impossible, everyone striving to be the master. It may, therfore, be assumed that the smaller the number of governors, the more extensive the representation, the nearer the constitution approache. to the possibility of republicanism and may even arive at it by successive reforms."

Strauss: So in other words, that Kant was one hundred per cent serious here I cannot bring myself to believe. (inaudible) He said only that part which was at that time sayable.

Let us read the note when he quotes Mallet du Pan.

Reader: "Mallet du Pan in his pompous but empty and hollow language . . . and the power of the sovereign being sufficient to exclude them."

Strauss: What does this mean regarding the question of monarchy?

Student: inaudible

Strauss: Yes. In other words, surely no hereditary monarchy, except by accident. That is quite interesting. Whether Kant thought of that when he wrote it I am not so sure.

Let us turn to the second article and read only the second half of the first paragraph. This would be a League of Nations.

Reader: "without the people, however, forming one and the same state."

Strauss: That is, without being a state of nations. It is a league of nations without being a state of nations.

Reader: "the idea of a state supposing the relation of a sovereign to the people, of a superior to his inferior. Now several nations united into one state would no longer form itself as one, which contradicts itself as issued. The question here is of the reciprocal rights of nations inasmuch as they compose a multitude of different states which ought not to be incorporated into one and the same state."

Strauss: Why not? Why not a world state? Why only a league of nations? What is your answer?

Student: As I understood it one state offers no alternatives and presents the danger of despotism.

Strauss: He speaks of that later. We will come to it. But at this point he already presupposes it. Yes.

Kant speaks later in the sequel on page 99 of the very dubious international law of his time which nevertheless points to a league

of nations, and also that the league of nations does not limit the sovereignty of each state.

At the end of this section, page 100, the bottom.

Reader: "The practicability (objective reality) of this idea of federation, which should gradually spread to all states and thus lead to perpetual peace, can be proved. For if fortune directs that a powerful and enlightened people can make itself a republic, which by its nature must be inclined to perpetual peace, this gives a fulcrum to the federation with other states so that they may adhere to it and thus secure freedom under the idea of the law of nations. By more and more such associations, the federation may be gradually extended."

Strauss: What does this nameless statement refer to?

Reader: The directory of France.

Strauss: Yes. The French revolutionary government. A mighty and enlightened nation has become a republic and which must be directed toward perpetual peace. One could, of course, say that the revolutionary wars were imposed upon France by the attacks on the part of the absolute monarchies, but this changed in the course of the years and especially when Napoleon enters the scene.

But the movement toward perpetual peace depends on chance, fortune. It so happened that somewhere a republic was established and this might spread.

Let us turn now to the second paragraph on page 105.

Reader: "Since the narrower or wider community of the peoples of the earth has developed so far that a violation of rights in one place is felt throughout the world, the idea of a law of world citizenship is no high-flown or exaggerated notion. It is a supplement to the unwritten code of the civil and international law, indispensable for the maintenance of the public human rights and hence also of perpetual peace."

Strauss: So the fact that communication among human beings has become global more and more in the course of the centuries - this is another factor pointing toward the possibility of perpetual peace.

These things - like the French Revolution - are, however, by no means sufficient. Therefore, Kant speaks in the next section of the guarantee of perpetual peace. Hitherto he has spoken only of an "ought" or of a pious wish. And now he has to speak of the guarantee. This guarantee can be given only by nature. It is beyond man's power. But it is nature working through man, but not man's intentions, man's morality. But nature will bring it about in its way.

Kant speaks in the note of why he does not wish to speak of providence and he regards it more appropriate to speak of nature.

The point which he makes here - and we have already heard this before - is that war is a part of nature's teleology. Nature

uses man's social antisociality, as Kant had called it earlier, in order to force him first into society and then to force the civil societies into a league of nations. So without in any way becoming more moral man will be compelled by nature to act according to a moral demand. Just as someone might say today that the fear of thermonuclear destruction has nothing to do with morality and yet this fear might induce men to abstain from war and, therefore, to comply with a moral demand.

This brings us to the question which we will take up next time. Here there is an amoral compulsion exerted by nature in the direction of morality. How is that related to man's morality? Perhaps we should read one passage on page 111, paragraph 1 at the beginning.

Reader: "So much for the measures which nature takes to lead the human race (considered as a class of animals) to her own ends."

Strauss: In other words, that has nothing to do with morality. Nature preserves this particularly nasty race to protect it against its own destruction. Now the sequel.

Reader: "Now we come to that which is most essential in the design for perpetual peace. What has nature done with regard to this end which man's own reason That is, what has nature done to favor man's moral purpose. And how has she guaranteed by compulsion but without prejudice to his freedom that he shall do that which he ought to, but does not do under the laws of freedom?"

Strauss: That is the precise question and we will discuss it next time.

The general character of the answer is this. The mechanism of nature working through man's fear of destruction brings about external compliance with the moral law, what Kant calls legality, but not morality.

So the philosophy of history, to generalize it, can only be the progressive history of man's legality. It cannot be the history of man's progressive morality.

Seminar on Kant

Session XV, May 23, 1967

This is a fine paper, Mr. _____. This crucial point that you made, that there is no necessary connection between Kant's moral philosophy and his philosophy of history, we may have to reconsider.

There are only two points which I would like to make. You spoke of an intra-scientific conflict. I think that, concerning Kant's intentions, one would have to speak of conflict between a science and a pseudo-science. Yes? Good.

And then you referred to Rousseau when Kant speaks of a nation of devils. You say that this was directed against Rousseau because Rousseau had said that only gods could establish a just constitution. Did you look up Rousseau?

Student: Yes.

Strauss: What does he say?

Student: He says that a democracy . . .

Strauss: A democracy. But what does Kant say about democracy?

Student: That a democracy is a possibility only in the infinite future.

Strauss: No. Kant rejects democracy. A democracy is inferior to aristocracy and to monarchy. That, he says, is visible. Because there is not a clear distinction between the legislator and, particularly, the judge. In a democracy in the old sense, the sovereign people would be both the legislator and the judge as it was in Athens, for example.

So I don't believe that the evidence is directed against Rousseau. Did you have any evidence for this?

Student: Only suggests which I think were in Freidrich.

Strauss: That is just an opinion and, if no evidence is produced, it is an unfounded opinion.

Student: I had the impression that if all men become enlightened (which is a possibility) that then . . .

Strauss: Not seriously considered by Kant. He always speaks of the scholars and their special function . . .

Student: But it is serious as Perpetual Peace goes, istn't it?

Strauss: Well, what Kant expects is that properly enlightened philosophers - men who have learned the pure principles of morality from Kant - might influence gradually the governments

and create a kind of opinion which the governments would have to respect. But not an appeal over the heads of the government to the people. That was not Kant's meaning.

Freidrich - I know him quite well. We both come from Germany and from the same school. But he is somewhat too eager to bridge the gulf between Kant's political philosophy and democracy. I believe that that is underlying this particular point. I say this with all due respect, but still I can't tolerate a misinterpretation.

We have not yet completed our discussion of what we started last time. We begin on page 111. This is in the section called "The Definitive Article on Eternal Peace," First Edition. Read this section.

Reader: "Even if a people were not forced by internal discord to submit to submit to public laws, war would compel them to do so for we have already seen that nature has placed each people near another which presses upon it. Against this it must form itself into a state in order to defend itself."

Strauss: As a power. This is all very realistic and very Hobbian in particular. Go on.

Reader: "Now the republic constitution . . ."

Strauss: Republican, again, never means democratic in Kant.

Reader: " . . . is the only one entirely fitting to the rights of man."

Strauss: So here now the moral consideration enters.

Reader: "But it is the most difficult to establish and even harder to preserve so that many say a republic would have to be a nation of angels."

Strauss: "Many" means at least not only Rousseau. This must have been one of those common sayings. I couldn't tell you now where it occurs, but it must have been very common. In the Federalist Papers you find a statement, "only a nation of philosophers" which is almost the same as a nation of angels.

Student: It says that if all men were angels no government would be necessary.

Strauss: Yes. Well, it must have been a very common saying.

Reader: " . . . because men with their selfish inclinations are not capable of a constitution of such sublime form. But precisely with these inclinations Nature comes to the aid of the general will established in reason which is revered even though impotent in practice. Thus it is only a question of a good organization of the state which does lie in man's power

whereby the powers of each selfish inclination are so arranged in opposition that one moderates or destroys the ruinous effects of the other. Consequence for reason is the same as if none of them existed and man is forced to be a good citizen even if not a morally good person."

Strauss: "Good man."

Reader: "The problem of organizing a state, however hard it may seem can be solved even for a race of devils, if only they are intelligent. The problem is: 'Given a multitude of rational beings requiring universal laws for their preservation but each of whom is secretly inclined to exempt himself from them, to establish a constitution in such a way that, although their private intentions conflict, they check each other, with the result that their public conduct is the same as if they had no such intentions.'

"A problem like this must be capable of solution; it does not require that we know how to attain the moral improvement of men but only that we should know the mechanism of nature in order to use it on men, organizing the conflict of the hostile intentions present in a people in such a way that they must compel themselves to submit to coercive laws.".

Strauss: "They must compel each other" would be more literal. What I call the horizontal limitation of freedom, not the vertical. A compulsion exerted only by other human beings.

Reader: " . . .Thus a state of peace is established in which laws have force. We can see, even in actual states, which are far from perfectly organized"

Strauss: "which are still very imperfectly organized" They are still very remote from being based on the right of man.

Reader: " . . . that in their foreign relations they approach that which the idea of right prescribes. This is so in spite of the fact that the intrinsic element of morality is certainly not the cause of it.(A good constitution is not to be expected from morality, but, conversely, a good moral condition of a people is to be expected only under a good constitution.) Instead of genuine morality, the mechanism of nature brings it to pass through selfish inclinations, which naturally conflict outwardly but which can be used by reason as a means for making room for its own end, the sovereignty of law, and, as concerns the state, for promoting and securing internal and external peace."

Strauss: This is a very important passage. Kant has never stated it more forcefully than here. This is, of course, something quite alien to earlier thought. That a nation of devils - provided that they are not fools - could establish a perfectly just order, not a perfectly moral order but a perfectly just order. I.e., where all laws are just and are, in the main, obeyed. Individuals committing crimes are uninteresting because they will exist at all times.

However - and that is the crucial point which you missed, I believe when you said that Kant's philosophy of history has nothing to do with moral philosophy . . .

Student: I said that there is not a necessary connection.

Strauss: Yes, but it is morally relevant. Now let us go into that.

The mechanism of nature, whether used by man as Adam Smith or as The Federalist Papers propose, or without any conscious use by man, brings about the just order, but only the external order, what Kant calls legality in contradistinction to morality.

There is a statement of Hobbes which comes close to what Kant says. It is not identical. Hobbes says that the question of the establishment of peace depends decisively on man the maker. Man is also the matter of this thing. But if the maker is sufficiently intelligent he can mold that matter. That comes close to what Kant says. In other words, there is no chance or whatever you might call it, which has to be taken into consideration and which might counteract the noblest intentions and the wisest plans. There is an inner necessity for the perfect social order being established.

Generally speaking, in the pre-modern it was understood - in Plato and Aristotle - there is a perfect social order which is possible. It can be established. But there is no intrinsic necessity whatsoever for its being established. In Plato, the condition for its establishment is literally the coincidences falling together of philosophy and political polity. A coincidence means, of course, something which you cannot plan, for which you can, at best, hope and pray.

The modern rebellion against the classical scheme - that rebellion starting with Machiavelli - is, "We do not want to have imagined commonwealths as Plato and Aristotle have imagined. We want to have an order the actualization of which is at least probable because it is in agreement with what men actually desire at all times."

Hobbes' scheme is required by man's desire for self-preservation than which nothing is more powerful according to Hobbes. Therefore, it is much easier to get than one which is based on man's inclination towards virtue which inclination is not very visible in many cases and, therefore, seems to be unrealistic, utopian.

What the philosophers of history like Kant and, of course, more clearly like Hegel, say is this, "There is not only a probability, but an intrinsic necessity of the ideal and the real converging. In Kant, of course, they converge only (inaudible) In Hegel they converge actually. And in Marx, as you know, there is also an actual convergence, although in the near future - the near future is changed from time to time from 1870 to 1919 and then again - what was Khruschev's date - I think the end of the century.

Let us come back to Kant. This mechanism of Nature - whether used by man or without man's use of it, will bring about the realization of the just order, i.e. of legality as legality. These men will still be crooks, devils. They will obey this just order only because it doesn't pay or they will be punished for not obeying it. They will not obey it from conviction. Still, it is otherwise a just order.

Why is it not the moral order as distinguished from the legal order? The legal order is a morally required order, but not itself moral because it requires only external compliance. Legal does not mean here, of course, positive law only. I hope that that is clear. It would be in older language the natural law, but referring only to the external action. Why is it not the moral order? And why can the moral order not be brought about by this mechanism of Nature whether used by man or not used by man?

Student: Because it is not the result of freedom.

Strauss: Man cannot be forced to be moral. He cannot be forced by Nature or even by God to be moral. And still less, of course, by a mere mechanism of the passions.

Morality is the affair of each individual and that is unpredictable and, therefore, it is not a matter regarding which a philosopher can say anything.

Hence philosophy of history, as I put it, is outside the gate, but it is directly at the gate. It is very relevant: No moral man can be unconcerned with perpetual peace and with the republican order, but he is not responsible for it.

There is, however, another reason why this distinction is so crucial and why, therefore, a philosophy of history cannot be a part of Kant's system strictly understood.

In order to substantiate it we would have to read sections of the Critique of Practical Reason dealing with the highest good which then brings up the question of the immortality of the soul part of which we read on an earlier occasion, and the existence of God. The immortality of the soul preceding the discussion of the existence of God. That is Kant's doctrine of the highest good. The highest good, according to Kant is not identical with morality. Morality is the core of the highest good, but not the whole highest good. Morality makes the man worthy of happiness, but it does not as such guarantee his happiness. Think of Job if you don't know living examples.

Therefore, the highest good consists of both morality and happiness for those who are worthy of happiness. The fundamental view that morality is the core of happiness but not simply identical with happiness is, of course, also the old view of Aristotle in particular. But in Kant this takes on a somewhat different meaning.

What Kant says amounts to this: There is no correspondence of morality and happiness in this life, nor will there every be in however enlightened a future such a correspondence. Generally stated, there cannot ever be a complete solution of the human problem in this life. This being the case, it is necessary to postulate the immortality of the soul and the existence of God.

This means, of course, again that there cannot be a philosophy of history. Philosophy of history in the strict sense, as elaborated finally by Hegel, presents a situation in which the human problem is completely solved. Hegel knows from his own time that there are all sorts of people who are miserable although they deserve not to be miserable . The long list of things which led Hamlet to despair - you remember the list? - this goes on and on. Hegel says that this is petty or that there are people who wholly undeservedly are miserable because they love a woman let us say, and the woman doesn't love them in return. It can't be helped. A man must get over these minor petty difficulties although he cannot be blamed if he sheds some tears over matters of this kind.

Be this as it may, because there cannot be a correspondence of happiness and morality in this life and because morality as such is the affair of each individual - for these two reasons philosophy of history does not fill the bill and we need the postulation of life eternal. Therefore, the philosophy of history cannot be so important.

The denial of these two Kantian points is, then, the soul of Hegel because Hegel could not have said that the human problem is solved nor could Marx have said that the human problem will be completely solved in the realm of freedom. And the Hegel-Marxian reasons are, then, these. Not necessarily that morality isn't important. I wouldn't say that. But I would simply say that if man acts according to morality, let us say, and habitually (minor exceptions all the time and are of no great concern) then what more do you want if you say that you do not know that this worker in a Marxist scheme does his duty only because he is afraid of punishment or of a bad reputation. "How do you know?" Hegel and Marx would say.

Referring to Kant, no one can know whether a man who acts legally does so from moral purposes or not. That we cannot know. So this is a matter which is wholly undecidable and we are perfectly satisfied if people are good citizens, as Kant calls it.

As for the other question: the lack of correspondence between happiness and morality - for example, if we take the case of unhappy love. The position of Hegel and Marx is very tough. We can't help that and it is not worthy of a serious human being to worry too greatly about that, at least after he has reached a certain age. Some people today who were originally Marxist made a synthesis of Marx and Freud and said that those who have such unfortunate love troubles will be sent free of

charge to a psychiatrist. He will guarantee that kind of private happiness which the wonderful institutions of the perfect society cannot possibly provide. Is this not true? Is this not what Mr. Blumberg means ultimately? I have never read anything of his, but I have heard about it. Well, I do not wish to be unjust to him, but from what I've heard I figured that out. I believe that the West, at any rate admitted this to be a defect of original Marxism - that it did not consider sufficiently the worries of the individual.

I can only repeat that, to that extent, you were quite right. That the core of morality as Kant understands it, does not lead to a philosophy of history. That simply tells you - a categoric imperative - thou canst because thou oughtst. And if this is not a matter which depends upon your private ability to achieve - say, the just society or perpetual peace - then you have no responsibility except that you can wish or pray that your government or the government of the world will become more rational than they are at present. To that extent it is quite true.

We must also consider that history is morally relevant for its goal is required by morality. But if that goal were not also recommended by calculation it would remain wholly utopian. Only because it is also demanded by calculation does it have a ghost of a chance to be real.

History, as we would say, or Nature, as Kant says, works and can work only through amoral or immoral means, the laternative being incompatible with human freedom. Morality alone cannot bring into being the just order. Morality cannot guarantee public peace. You remember the section in your edition on page 106 entitled, "The Guarantee of Perpetual Peace."

This means, of course, this guarantee on which Kant depends both in domestic and in international affairs is on a rather low moral order. That is a strange coming together in Kant's thought of a very severe moralism with a kind of thinking which can best be traced to Machiavelli or to other bad guys. I would take the liberty to consider some of the Federalist Papers as belonging to the bad guys. I hope that no patriot will take this ill.

Mr. [illegible]

Student: You say that the goal of history is offerred as an alternative consolation to those who cannot believe in God?

Strauss: No. That would be such a shocking proposal that everyone would haste to shudder at the thought.

There are things in Kant which no one has ever solved, but I would say that, whereas in other cases, for example in the case of Locke, I have not hesitated to assert even in public that the serious view is much less respectable than is generally so, in the case of Kant that would not make sense.

Student: He keeps repeating that if it weren't for natural necessity bringing this about, all our working towards it would be fruitless. This in the historical writings. But in the moral writings . . .

Strauss: Not your morality proper. You can be an honest man even under Genghis Khan or Nero.

Student: There is one place where he says that only in a republican constitution can you expect . . .

Strauss: Here is a pssage which we just read which hassomething to this effect.

Reader: "A good constitution is not to be expected from morality but, conversely, a good moral condition of a people is to be expected only under a good constitution."

Strauss: "A good moral education." This is a very strong remark and is probably the strongest that occurs in Kant. That the good moral education of the people would depend - and that is the point where Hegel would say, "Hear!" You know. You can't leave it at what people know through their conscience, through their awareness of the moral law. Unless the man is unusually wise, it is of very little effect. The people in general listen to their teachers and their teachers are chiefly the religious teachers, the preachers. Whether preachers always teach a pure moral teaching is, for Kant, a question. This would then depend on the enlightenment of the government. Say, Frederick the Great of Prussia or Joseph the II of Austria, i.e. enlightened rulers. This is an obvious difficulty for Kant. I do not deny that. Were you the one who referred to that Mr. ____? That was a good point.

Student: (inaudible)

Strauss: As far as I know, Kant did not find any difficulty in that because it was not the issue. The issue was only, should the teaching of the people (ultimately coming back to what they are taught in divinity schools) would this be, say, Lutheran orthodoxy or would this be a kind of enlightened Christianity, liberal Christianity? That would be the question. And their moral stature would increase if their preachers were enlightened Christians and not narrow, orthodox Christians. I do not here make any judgements on Lutheranism. I only try to restate the view as closely as possible to Kant's own view.

Student: I am looking to the other question. I am asking if, according to Kant, a belief in God is essential for leading some people to have hope in the moral . . .

Strauss: All men. Men act immorally if they comply with the moral law in order to be rewarded by God or in order not to be punished by God. But if they act morally, Kant says that they cannot consistently do that without believing in God.

The belief in God and the immortality of the soul is not a condition, but the necessary consequence of the respect for the moral law. That is Kant's point. So the existence of God is not in any way the issue.

As for the fundamental issue of interpretation which you implicitly raise, Mr. _____, I would give this answer as a provisional answer. This phenomenon to which I have referred frequently in my publications and also in class, namely, that in earlier centuries heterodox thinkers concealed their fundamental deviation from the orthodox views and elaborated a certain technique in doing so, what I call persecution and the art of writing. This I am sure exists and is not sufficiently considered by present-day history. But it also disappeared and it disappeared although we have seen in our age both in Nazi Germany and in the Communist countries, quite a bit of persecution in the art of writing. But, to the best of my knowledge, not a single man either in Germany or in the Eastern countries has drawn the conclusion that this might throw some light on the literature of the past and on a much higher literature than what is popularly produced now because there were many more centuries in the past than we have now.

If you correct my I will listen with great interest.

Student: No. I just wanted to say . . .

Strauss: They couldn't write on that, of course. They couldn't write on persecution in the art of writing without ruining themselves.

Student: (inaudible)

Strauss: But none in purely historical style.

Student: Even in historical studies they can't.

Strauss: Well they could conceivably especially if there was a wicked man from the Marxist point of view. Be this as it may this has disappeared. Generally speaking, we can say that its disappearance was a consequence of the French Revolution.

Then, as always happens or can happen, in any case, such purely external changes, social changes, then find their expression in theoretical assertions. Now if we look at what people like Hegel and Schleiermacher, the originator of modern Platonic research, and what they do with this question of possible concealment say in Plato. It shows that they have simply rejected this notion and they became the teachers of many famous historians, philologists etc.

The consequence is what we have today. So that if someone like poor me says that there are such things he is regarded as a man who talks strange things, to use a polite expression. He is wholly unworthy of consideration. From a certain moment on, then, this has changed at roughly the time of

Kant. Why, then, should Kant not be one of these recent great men who would not use such kinds of concealment in important matters. I mean that Kant should hem and haw a bit when confronted with a script of the minister of the King of Prussia. The censorship question which we will speak of next time. That is possible. That is uninteresting.

In Czarist Russia where they had quite a bit of censorship, they had an expression: "He is speaking using Esopian language." So it was still a fact, then, but it had apparently induced no historian, no scholar, to consider the possible importance of this point.

Let us take an example which is easy to discuss. What was the freedom under the Roman Empire to criticize the Roman Empire. I am speaking now of the subject nations. This would apply, of course, especially to the Greeks. I am not so such whether a close study of Plutarch's biography, the Parallel Lives of Illustrious Greeks and Romans would not show a certain reserved plea of Plutarch for a superiority of the Greeks which could not well be said.

There is a statement of Xenophon where he says that it was impossible at that time to say anything against the Spartans. That was immediately after the Peloponnesian War. These simple things that everyone knows - that there is a somewhat brutal victorious power like the Spartans in that day and the Romans in theirs. That people will keep their mouths shut and if they speak will only speak by indirection. This commonsense observation has, I think been disregarded ordinarily and I think that we are the losers.

But now we must return to Kant. On page 130, paragraph 2. We will not read that because it has been clearly accounted for by Mr. _____. Here Kant answers for the first time the question: **Why** there must be states? After all, if we want perpetual peace why do we not have a universal state which may consist of provinces, of course, but with one central government.

Here Kant gives a very plausible answer. Namely, that this would be a soulless despotism. The universal state would be a terribly despotic state. This makes very much sense, but I raise **only** one question. How does Kant know this? Can this be **known** a priori or is this not a reference to sound empirical observation throughout the ages.

Be that as it may, Kant says here that Nature prevents the universal state through the diversity of languages and of religions. Now religions means here, of course, positive religions because the religion, according to Kant, is only one. But nature connects the nations by commerce and, as Kant also says, by the spirit of commerce.

So religion pulls one way and commerce the other. That is the great problem of modern times. That must not be understood in a marxist manner because the marxist situation - that the economic relations are the key - is a consequence

of the fact that men from a certain time one, for unknown reasons, turned to the economic things as much more important than the things of the other world. Once this decision was made it became a fact of utmost importance which could then understandably be used as the key to all history. But what is understandable is not always the correct reason.

Now we come to the next point. We turn now to the Appendix. Kant begins the Appendix with the observation that there is question regarding whether it is feasible to obey the moral law. That is clear. Thou canst because thou oughtst and therefore, there is no legitimate conflict between morality and politics. What is possible at all times is the rebellion of immoral politicians to morality. That is not in itself different from ordinary criminality although these criminals cannot be easily brought to justice. But what, then, is the difficulty? Let us read on page 117, the second paragraph.

Reader: "Politics says, 'Be ye wise as serpents'; morality adds, as a limiting condition, 'and guileless as doves.' If these two injunctions are incompatible in a single command, these two qualities ought always to be united, the thought of contrariety is absurd, and the question as to how the conflict between morals and politics is to be resolved cannot even be posed as a problem. Although the proposition, 'Honesty is the best policy,' implies a theory which practice unfortunately often refutes, the equally theoretical, 'Honesty is better than any policy,' is beyond refutation and is indeed the indispensable condition of policy."

Strauss: So, again, no difficulty. The difficulty is caused by the practitioner which begins in the next paragraph.

Reader: "Now the practical man, to whom morality is merely theory even though he concedes that it can and should be followed, ruthlessly . . .

Strauss: "Ruthless" is too weak. "Disloyally" or treacherously" would be better.

Reader: "He does so because he pretends to have seen in advance that man . . ."

Strauss: "That he can predict from the nature of man."

Reader: " . . . that he pretends to predict from the nature of man that he will never will what is required for realizing the goal of perpetual peace."

Strauss: So, in other words, the practitioner - the immoral politician - believes he can predict, to use a word of Tacitus which was, then, taken over by Spinoza, that there will be vices as long as there are human beings and, therefore in particular those vices which make universal peace impossible.

What Kant says, in other words, is this: These politicians and not only petty politicans but men of the greatness of Bismarck would of course belong to the same kind of man. These have an indefensible and absurd dogmatism. They assert something which they cannot possibly know: that men and governing will always be immoral. Yes?

Student: Don't they simply assert that at present men will act immorally?

Strauss: Yes. But, still, there present actions would be different if they would anticipate a better future.

Student: I was wondering if this means that Kant is asserting that it is theoretically possible at any moment . . .

Strauss: Well, Kant does not go sufficiently into detail. That is quite true. But look at the situation of the present time. When you come to the Cold War question and all its implications, then you are ultimately up to this point: Can you trust the other side? And the practical reasons against trusting are overwhelming.

But what Kant would say is this: "If one side, at least, does not begin to trust in the hope that it is possible that the others will respond - that is the point. I am against trusting, by the way. That is not the point, but I try to understand Kant's position because it is a most respectable basis of what now is called the liberal approach to such matters. Most respectful.

Student: That is really different from the approach that one would take on the basis of a philosophy of history which tells you that perpetual peace will come in the future under certain conditions, but which would justify all sorts of war and distrust now . . .

Strauss: Sure. Kant eventually comes up with such things. That is quite true.

Still, if one states it in theoretical terms, Kant surely has a point which deserves consideration. Is one entitled to say passages from Spinoza and all the other so-called realistic writers, that there will be vices and, particularly political vices as long as there will be human beings?

You see, on the other hand, that such a jump from the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom as Marx uses it, is of course based on a Kantian foundation as is indicated by the very terms "necessity" and "freedom." Only Marx tries to make it as realistic as possible by his doctrine of the class struggle and of the revolution and so on. But the fundamental point is the same. We can hope and we are even morally compelled to hope, as Kant says, (Marx would say that we are rationally compelled to do so.) that there will be a human world without vices to speak of.

As Kant makes clear in the sequel, the will of individuals is insufficient for bringing about perpetual peace. Only the general will can do this. And this means that the beginning of this process will have to be made by force. That is stated on page 118, the second paragraph. "There can be no other beginning of the lawful condition we expected but that through force."

Reader: "And in the practical execution of this idea we can count on nothing but force to establish the juridical condition . . ."

Strauss: " . . . on no other beginning of the legal state."

Reader: " . . . on the compulsion of which public law will later be established."

Strauss: That is all we need. The beginning will have to be made by force. Then there comes a point on page 118, bottom . . .

Reader: "It will then be said . . ."

Strauss: Namely, by these nasty people.

Reader: " . . . that he who once has power in his hands will not allow the people to prescribe laws for him. A state which is once able to stand with no external laws will not submit to the decision of otherstates on how it should seek its rights against them."

Strauss: In other words, here where Marx is one of the opponents of Kant, no ruling class ever abdicated voluntarily. That doesn't happen. That is an objection to Kant. No state is willing to submit its vital interests to a league of nations.

Kant goes on to say that all these objections would be true if there were no freedom and moral law. Therefore, it is possible that a ruling class voluntarily abdicates, that governments submit even matters of vital interest to arbitration etc.

Since this is the case, since there is freedom in the moral law there can, of course, only be a very slow, a cautious move towards what is required by natural right. That is on page 119.

Let us read the note on page 120.

Reader: These are permissive laws of reason. Public law laden with injustice, must be allowed to stand either until everything is, of itself, right or completely formed or until this maturity has been brought about by peaceable means."

Strauss: So reason permits to postpone the measures conducive to universal peace under another just order because of the reign of injustice hitherto. You cannot change these large masses overnight.

These are permissive laws of reason: To leave the condition of a public right which is tainted by injustice until everything has matured by itself for the complete revolution. Interesting. And it would be a radical change from injustice to justice. Yes?

Reader: "For a legal constitution, even though it only be right to a low degree is better than none at all, the anarchic condition which would result from precipitous reform. Political wisdom, therefore, will make it a duty to introduce reforms which accord with the ideal of public law. But even when nature herself produces revolutions, political wisdom will not employ them to legitimize still greater oppression."

Strauss: Namely saying, "Look. You are such wicked people. You have rebelled against your lawful sovereign." What will they do? They will use the revolution as a call of nature.

Reader: "On the contrary, it will use them as a call of nature for fundamental reforms to produce a lawful constitution founded upon principles of freedom, for only such a constitution is durable."

Strauss: There was, of course, not the slightest empirical evidence at the time that such a constitution was durable whereas there was quite a bit of empirical evidence to the durability of such unrepublican regimes as the Roman Empire and quite a few others.

Natural right requires, ultimately, a complete revolution. Kant does not mean, of course, a bloody revolution, but a complete revolution.

Then Kant comes to speak of the moralizing politicians by whom Kant understands the real politica, the power politics men and their maxims which is quite interesting to read, but we unfortunately do not have the time.

Let us look at the note on page 123. We cannot read that whole very long note. Start where he says, "In the interior . . ."

Reader: "In the interior of each state it is veiled by the compulsion of civil laws, because the inclination to violence between the citizens is fettered by the stronger power of the government. This relationship not only gives a moral veneer (causae non causae) . . ."

Strauss: Meaning this: It is a logical error - regarding as the cause what is not the cause. You see people in a decent society - no crime and no visible corruption, and then you say that this is a moral people which you cannot say because it may be mere legality in conterdistinction to morality.

Reader: " . . . to the whole but actually facilitates the development of the moral disposition to a direct respect for the law by placing a barrier against the outbreak of unlawful inclinations . . ."

Strauss: The development of man's moral disposition is alleviated by legality. Go on.

Reader: "Each person believes that he himself would hold the concept of law sacred and faithfully follow it provided he was sure that he could expect the same from others, and the government does in part assure him of this. Thereby a great step (though not yet a moral step) is taken toward morality . . ."

Strauss: "Toward morality." "Toward" is underlined by Kant. That is all we need.

So it is, by no means morally relevant. It is even necessary for morality, but yet it is not yet itself morality.

Kant traces then the differences between him and his opponents to its fundamental principle which is that his opponents are eudaemonists and he is a moralist strictly understood. This makes clear again the uncertainty of all prudential, experiential politics which is undeniable.

Kant is certain (he expresses it on page 125 in the fourth paragraph) that moral politics will lead to perpetual peace. Read the second sentence of this paragraph.

Reader: "For it is the peculiarity of morals, especially with respect to its principles of public law and, hence, in relation to a politics known a priori, that the less it makes conduct depend on the proposed end, i.e., the intended material or moral advantage, the more it agrees with it in general."

Strauss: "In general." That is the crucial qualification.

Reader: "This is because it is the universal will given a priori in a nation or in the relations among different nations which determines the law among men and if practice consistently follows it this will can also by the mechanism of nature cause the desired result and make the concept of law effective."

Strauss: "Can," he says. It can be the cause. In other words, there are certain doubts whether the moral politics will, in fact, lead to perpetual peace. So this success of moral politics depends not on moral politics, but on these tough reasons that Kant calls, "the mechanism of nature."

At the end of this whole section on page 228 Kant speaks of hope for perpetual peace, not more. I.e., he cannot, in any sense, predict it, but he can only hope it. He regards himself as morally required to hope.

This last section on page 129 following we have to discuss next time because this maxim, the transcendental formula of public law, as Kant calls it. All actions related to the rights of other men are unjust if the maxims of these acts are incompatible with publicity. That is somewhat modified

a bit later. In this way, that all maxims which require - demand - publicity in order to be successful are surely just or moral. So publicity is, in itself (I mean, not in the vulgar sense in which it is now used) a criterion of morality. That is a very important point. It excludes a priori not only Plato's noble lie (This would be impossible. The governors would say, "This is our noble lie."), but also more innocent things like the point discussed in the 17th century quite frequently, "Should the right of the people to rebellion not be kept under cover most of the time and only brought forth in times where it is needed?" This Kant, as you know, rejects. Therefore, he rejects the right of revolution because you cannot always openly pronounce it.

This is a great break, I think, with earlier thought and we should discuss it at some length for which we do not have the time now.

I mention only one point at the end of the whole writing, page 135, the last paragraph. Read this please.

Reader: "If it is a duty to make real (even if only through approximation in endless progress) the state of public law, and if there is well-grounded hope that this can actually be done, then perpetual peace, as the condition that will follow what has erroneously been called treaties of peace (but which in reality are only armistices) is not an empty idea. As the times required for equal steps of progress become, we hope, shorter and shorter, perpetual peace is a problem which, gradually working out its own solution, continuously approaches its goal."

Strauss: But this is no qualification to Kant's assertion that an infinite progress is required. As I have said more than once, perpetual peace as the goal of an infinite progress is the same as perpetual war. Or if you want to put it in the form of a diagram. I want to show first a state of complete war and now a state of ever-decreasing war. Then we will find the state in which there is less. But it will never disappear (drawing on board). Since men progres the gravity of the wars may not preclude their savagery meaning the devastating character of the war.

Seminar on Kant

Session XVI, May 2[illegible], 1967

You spoke about the conditions under which Kant wrote and published this piece in 1798. Now 1797 was an important date in history because the successor to Frederick the Great, Frederick William II, died. His minister was the one who tried to censor. The moment this obnoxious minister appeared, Kant could lay the axe of this whole controversy before the public. This, I think, is of some importance.

As to the point why Kant presents this piece about the future of mankind in the content of a discussion with the law faculty, you rightly say, "What has this to do with the law faculty?" But it is, of course, not difficult to answer that question. Can you repeat your answer?

Student: I am saying that he is talking about it in the larger content of the relationship between philosophy and law, and that he is especially concerned with educating the politicians or change on the legal level because change must come from above rather than from below.

Strauss: Law means here, of course, in the wide sense also public law and, therefore, also the higher officials including ministers. Good. And what is the conflict between the lower faculty and the law faculty which is one of the higher faculties?

Student: The conflict is that philosophy is in the German universities directed toward general education and this is not the level on which the change is to come about.

Strauss: No. You must really start from the much more superficial and important. The philosopher teaches natural law and has nothing to do with positive law. The law faculty teaches positive law. Natural law is much higher than positive law de jure. But de facto the positive law given by the state and invested with the whole majesty of the state imposes itself much more especially on the officials high and low than natural law which exists, so to speak, only in books written by philosophers.

There are two meanings of de jure here. In one way, the law faculty is higher than the philosophic faculty because the law faculty belongs to the higher and philosophy to the lower. But, in a deeper sense, de jure the philosophic faculty is higher. The controversy with the law faculty was not so serious as that with theology and, if you would look at the German edition, you would see that the discussion with the theology faculty is more than half the whole work.

Now you made this interesting point that Kant might himself be a diviner in the sense as he defines it there. He can divine the future because he brings it about or contributes to its coming about by his publications. That is a very

interesting suggestion, but it leads to certain difficulties. The philosophers much teach the natural law which includes perpetual peace as Kant understands it. They are under an obligation to do so not only because of their conscience, but also because they are paid for doing that. That is their function. So the realization of something like the millenium depends on something like academic freedom, especially of the philosophy faculty and the department of philosophy. In that time it made sense because philosophy had an enormous influence in Germany.

Why does the state permit that? The Prussians had a very strong army and police force which could easily have suppressed academic freedom. An earlier German philosopher, (not of the rank of Kant), Christian Wolf, taught Leibnitzian philosophy in a Prussian University. This was the famous king who originated really the Prussian army, later on used with so great success by Frederick the Great. This father of Frederick the Great didn't like this philosophy and therefore, said that he not only had to stop these lectures, but had to leave the Prussian state at once. Otherwise, he will be hanged. This can be done. And how, then, can the philosophers influence high ministers if they are deprived of their freedom? Incidentally, as soon as Frederick the Great succeeded, he called Wolf back and he became a baron.

Let us come back to the key point. Why does the state permit that? It permits philosophic patronage which follows only the truth regardless of what the higher faculties say.

Student: I would say that it is in the self-interest of the government not to suppress philosophy completely.

Strauss: Why not? There are various ways of suppressing philosophy. It can be done under its very name, but this would shock. It can be done indirectly by giving premiums to the philosophy professors who behave and understand hints from above, depriving the others of such privileges.

But what is the precise reason why the state needs philosophy? The philosophic faculty included at that time, b the way, also the natural sciences. I try to help you toward a present-day problem.

What I have in mind is the expectation of present-day people that in our age where science and technology are so terribly important even the most despotic state must permit science. And once you permit freedom there for the atomic sciences, you must permit it to all other cultivators of intelligence. Is this a valid reasoning?

Student 2: Well, in principle you could allow science and stop others which you consider dangerous, say philosophy. That is what has happened in the communist countries today.

Strauss: Exactly

Student 2: What is comes down to is a question of theory and practice.

Strauss: Sure. But we are speaking now trying to see the situation as it appears from the point of view of the mere practitioner who is by no means impressed with the greatness of truth and right, but only of keeping the state strong.

Student 3: Perhaps it has failed to draw the fact/value distinction and doesn't know how to separate the wheat of mathematics from . . .

Strauss: In other words, there was some truth in that expectation in Kant's time and, perhaps still more, in Bacon's time where the whole thing started. In Bacon's time philosophy and science were still the same thing and, therefore, a man of science was supposed to be also a sage. Therefore, no wisdom would prevent him from becoming a tool of mere power.

Once you have the situation where science is separated from philosophy and, therefore, in a radical sense a technique rather than wisdom, then, of course, by paying them properly and by giving them cars and other amenities you can have wonderful atomic scientists who will not have the slightest interest in taking issue with the government. They may be compelled to introduce Einstein's relativity theory (although there was originally a prohibition against that), but this can be done in technical contexts where the masses wouldn't notice anthing. That is easy. So there is a certain difficulty here.

What Kant also implies which might have, perhaps, contributed to the millenium is that Kant takes it for granted that the law faculties will be arch-reactionaries which is now no more. To the contrary, I would say now that the Supreme Court is liberal in this country. But in former times they teach the positive law and are, therefore, immune or tend to be immune to philosophy.

A final point, Miss _____ regarding my statement last time about Freidrich. I understand that you come from Radcliffe and are, therefore, bound to have some loyalties to Harvard. I should be very sorry . . .

Before we turn to this writing, we reached a point in Perpetual Peace, page 129, paragraph 2.

Reader: "Having set aside everything empirical in the concept of civil or international law (such as the wickedness in human nature which necessitates coercion), we can call the following proposition the transcendental formula of public law: "All actions relating to the right of other men are unjust if their maxim is not consistent with publicity."

"This principle is to be regarded not merely as ethical (as belonging to the doctrine of virtue)but also as juridical (concerning the right of man). A maxim which I cannot

divulge without defeating my own purpose must be kept secret if it is to succeed; and, if I cannot publicly avow it without inevitably exciting universal opposition to my project, the necessary and universal opposition which can be foreseen a priori is due only to the injustice with which the maxim threatens everyone. This principle is, furthermore, only negative, i.e., it only serves for the recognition of what is not just to others. Like an axiom, it is indemonstrably certain and, as will be seen in the following examples of public law, easily applied."

Strauss: The distinction which Kant makes here between the ethical and the juridical is an intra-moral distinction, i.e. juridical does not mean positive law. The whole realm of morality, as Kant understands it, consists of two parts. On part directed, which in the doctrine he calls the doctrine of virtue, and another which he calls doctrine of right.

The difference is that only what pertains to the rights of man is, by its nature, in need of coercion, whereas, for example, veracity (which belongs to virtue) - there is no right of the government to coerce people to say the truth except in special cases like law courts. That would be a different situation. But generally speaking, that cannot be a legal crime. So this is an intra-moral distinction, contrary to what it might seem to mean today.

Now the key point. "All actions relating to the right of other men are unjust if their maxim is not consistent with publicity." This is, of course, a crucial statement and a landmark, in a way. Particularly, you think of Plato's noble lie. Taking this also as more than a casual remark of Plato in one of his dialogues, but as presenting a principle that the higher may for the benefit of the subjects, lie to them. A popular example: In a way, the physician is your ruler. He doesn't, strictly speaking, command you, but he gives you orders of sorts. In many cases, physicians think that they should not tell the patient the truth about his condition because it might worsen the condition.

Another example is military commanders who may tell their troops that they will be relieved shortly so that they fight on. At least in former times, no one thought of condemning such a commander.

In Kant we have the diametrically opposed view. Publicity, compatibility or even need for publicity as a criterion for morality and rightness.

I find a remark in Hobbes' Leviathan which, I believe, is of some importance or some help for understanding this. This occurs in Chapter 15 of the Leviathan. At the end of Hobbes' discussion of natural law and where he has a section with the heading, "Justice not contrary to reason." And it begins in this remarkable way, "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no such thing as justice; and sometimes also with his tongue, seriously alleging that, every man's conservation and content-

ment being committed to his own care, there could be no reason why every man might not do what he thought conduced thereunto; and therefore also to make or not make, keep or not keep covenants was not against reason when it conduced to one's benefit. He does not therein deny that there be covenants and that they are sometimes broken, sometimes kept, and that such breach of them may be called injustice and the observance of them justice; but he questions whether injustice, taking away the fear of God - for the same fool hath said in his heart there is no God - may not sometimes stand with that reason which dictates to every man his own good," and so on.

"The kingdom of God is gotten by violence; but what if it could be gotten by unjust violence? Were it against reason so to get it, when it is impossible to receive hurt by it? And if it be not against reason, it is not against justice, or else justice is not to be approved for good. From such reasoning as this, successful wickedness has obtained the name of virtue; and some that in all other things have disallowed the violation of faith yet have allowed it when it is for the getting of a kingdom. And the heathen that believed that Saturn was deposed by his son Jupiter believed nevertheless the same Jupiter to be the avenger of injustice - somewhat like to a piece of law in Coke's Commentaries on Littleton where he says: if the right heir of the crown be attained of treason, yet the crown shall descend to him and at that instance the attainder be void; from which instances a man will be very prone to infer that when the heir apparent of a kingdom shall kill him that is in possession, though his father, you may call it injustice or by what othername you will, yet it can never be against reason, seeing all the voluntary actions of men tend to the benefit of themselves, and those actions are most reasonable that conduce most to their ends. This specious reasoning is nevertheless false."

And then, in the following argument, the following point occurs: "In a condition of war, wherein every man to every man, for want of a common power to keep them all in awe, is an enemy, there is no man who can hope by his own strength or wit to defend himself from destruction without the help of confederates, where everyone expects the same defense by the confederation that anyone else does; and therefore he which declares he thinks it reason to deceive those that help him can in reason expect no other means of safety than what can be had from his own single power. He, therefore, that breaks his covenant, and consequently declares that he thinks he may with reason do so, cannot be received into any society."

You see what Hobbes tacitly does. He applies the principle of publicity. This same crook, if he did not declare what he says, might get away with it. But if he declares it then, again, every hand will be against him. This is very interesting and shows you how moral Hobbes was.

In order to see this properly we have to look at Hobbes' ancient counterparts, the conventionalists, the people who

say that justice is only by convention. This, in a way, is also Hobbes' teaching. But it is a bit more subtle in Hobbes. Hobbes also says that where there is no government there is no justice or injustice.

Justice is entirely conventional. The variety of customs and laws in different countries is frequently appealed to in this connection, but this is not the core of the matter. The core is this consideration: In the case of other virtues or vices the vices are punished by nature. Take the simple example: If you overeat you will get stomach troubles.

But unjust acts, are they bad for you, for your selfish interests. The answer is, "Only if they are detected." If someone commits a most terrible crime and it is not detected as happens frequently, then he can become a pillar of society and what have you.

But nondetection is irrelevant in the case of overeating. Obvious and, therefore, this is truly natural. The other requires convention and is not truly natural.

This problem is beautifully presented in the second book of Plato's Republic. If a man has a ring which makes him invisible, then he can do all kinds of crimes with impunity. I trust that you all have read this once in your lives. It is a very powerful statement. And you can become king as this fellow did. But the ring or any other gadget of this kind would not prevent him from a stomach ache if he eats the wrong thing and so on.

This point which surely must be taken into consideration - that there is a difference between things which carry their punishment by nature and those which carry their punishment as far as we can observe empirically, only when just men reign. That is Spinoza's formulation. Justice will be found only where just men reign. That is important.

Hobbes, very interestingly, by making it a condition of rationality that you can declare your maxim, avoids or refutes conventionalists. Whether Hobbes, given his hedonistic starting point has a right to do so is a question which we cannot now settle. If he is not justified, it is still a great credit to his character which is nothing to be despised.

That is the clearest passage prior to Kant known to me where this principle of publicity is stated. And, therefore, that Hobbes has a natural law teaching, however thin it may appear to us in the light of the older natural law teaching, it is connected to this. Hobbes speaks of natural laws and this is connected with this difference. I thought that I should draw your attention to this.

Now, in the same context there is another point. On page 130. The next paragraph.

Reader: "In the law of the state or domestic law, there is a question which many hold to be difficult to answer, yet it is easily solved by the transcendental principle of publicity. The question is: 'Is rebellion a legitimate means for a people to employ in throwing off the yoke of an alleged tyrant?' The rights of the people are injured; no injustice befalls the tyrant when he is deposed. There can be no doubt on this point. Nevertheless, it is in the highest degree illegitimate for the subjects to seek their rights in this way. If they fail in the struggle and are then subjected to severest punishment, they cannot complain about injustice any more than the tyrant could if they had succeeded."

Strauss: Kant shows, then, in the sequel that immorality of revolution is shown by the fact that the principle (namely, the right of resistance to tyranny) cannot be publicly avowed. Therefore, the proceedings leading up to the uprising must be secret, conspiratorial. These people must, of course, lie. If there is an S.S. man around who asks them, "Why do you all go to this particular bar or restaurant?"

Student: The hamburgers are good.

Strauss: Exactly. They must lie.

The point with which I am concerned now is this: The question is here stated by Kant. Regarding the overthrowing of the yoke of an alleged tyrant (but Kant qualifies this by adding in parenthesis a Latin expression - a tyrant not by the title but by the exercise). Now this is an old, scholastic distinction. The tyrant on the grounds of lack of title being a usurper. He, of course, has no right whatsoever to his position. He is like a thief. But a legitimate ruler - say the heir to the king - can exercise his legitimate ruler in a beastly, tyrannical manner. And then he is a tyrant with respect to the exercise.

Kant says here, "I am speaking only of a rising against a legitimate ruler who rules tyrannically." He thus seems to imply that a rising against a mere usurper would be a different story, at least. That is interesting. I never have been aware of this implication.

Now let us turn to our writing.

Student: (inqudible) politic when Prussia was at war with Napoleon, or at least the only decent thing to say. To suggest that tyrants should be gotten rid of.

Strauss: Yes. There were some irregularities with Napoleon. But after he had married the daughter of the Austrian emperor you would have to question her title too. This is very hard in practice, just as in the case of Hitler. There is a radical Kantian today in Germany, Eppinghouse is his name. He was always anti-Nazi and survived somehow the Hitler time. He was absolutely opposed to all resistance being a strict Kantian. But he never brought up the question of whether

Hitler was a tyrant on account of defective title. You know there were some funny goings on with the burning down of the Reichstag. Still, the overall picture was that Hitler had been called to the chancellorship by the President. The formal legality, at least apparently, existed. One must be quite clumsy if one cannot preserve some appearance of formal legality.

Let us come to the writing we will discuss today, "Whether the Human Race is in a Steady, Continuous Progress Toward the Better." Now what is the issue? Kant makes clear that the issue is the fate of the human race, not of the individuals. We have discussed this before. The fate of the individuals cannot be predicted because of the freedom of each and also because there is no essential connection between morality and happiness or misery in this life. So it only concerns the fate of the human race.

Kant speaks, then, in the next paragraph . . . Read that.

Reader: "As a divinatory, historical narrative of the thing imminent in future time, consequently as a possible representation a priori of events which are supposed to happen then. But how is a history a priori possible? Answer: If the diviner himself creates and contrives the events which he announces in advance."

Strauss: So that is the history a priori with a slight double meaning. A priori before it happens, in advance of its happening. But also, of course, not empircally.

Why can there not be a prediction of the future on the basis of known natural laws as in the case of astronomy to which Kant referred before? Why is this not possible? Think of Marx. Marx doesn't claim that his predictions are a priori. To the contrary. He claims that it is based on the most comprehensive induction from known facts.

Student: One might raise the argument about freedom, but he himself in an earlier paper dismissed the idea that individual freedom precluded statistical regularities.

Strauss: Yes. That is quite true.

Student: Purely empirically, there is no causality even. And there is no necessity at all.

Strauss: No. That is not Kant's view of empirical.

Student: Well, he follows Hume in this particular thing - that the categories are . . .

Strauss: Kant understands by experience as distinguished from mere sense data something absolutely ruled by the principle of causality.

Student: Causality itself is apriori.

Strauss: The principle of causality, but not the particularities. You know that any law - say that on electricity - is based on observation. That there must be a rule of regular conduct of possible objects of experience - that is the a priori.

Let us keep this question in mind. Why Kant, apparently, at least, predicts strictly a priori. And the answer we should give is the point on which Mrs. _____ made so much - that is possible if the diviner himself makes the events which he predicts.

Then he gives as the three examples the Jewish prophets whom he identifies then with the priests. That is a very crude notion based on Spinoza's Theological and Political Treatise. The practical politicans are his second example and, finally, the clergymen with their predicting the coming of the anti-Christ. I think that we do not have to read that.

Then he clarifies the question by stating the alternatives. There are three possibilities regarding the future of mankind. Terrorism, as Kant calls it. Eudaemonism and Abderatism. Why does he call it Abderatism?

Student: In reference to Democritus.

Strauss: Not to Democritus, but to his countrymen, the Abderides, the citizens of Abdera. There are such stories in all countries. In Germany, . What are they called in England? You know, the crazy people who do everything the wrong way. Is there not an English town which has this reputation? Its inhabitants are all, in a nice way, mad.

Student: (inaudible)

Strauss: It's no longer used, is it?

Student: (inaudible)

Strauss: I see. In Germany this was very well known. It was called the . For example, they built a town hall and forgot to have windows. So it was entirely dark. Then they brought the light in in bags. In other words, fools.

The terroristic notion of the history of man is that it is getting worse and worse.

What about the second notion, the eudaemonistic? On page 140, paragraph 2.

Reader: "It may always be conceded that the proportion of good and evil elements inherent in our predisposition remains constant and can neither be augmented or diminished in the same individual. How, then, should the quantity of good in our predisposition increase? For that would happen

only through the freedom of the subject for which purpose the subject would in turn require a greater reservoir of good than it now possesses. The effects cannot surpass the power of the sufficient cause. Thus, the quantity of good mixed in man with evil cannot exceed a certain measure beyond which it would be able to work its way up, and thus forever proceed towards the better.

"Eudaemonism, with its sanguine hopes, therefore appears to be untenable and to promise little in a prophetic history of humanity in favor of progress endlessly broadening its course towards the good."

Strauss: That is strange. Kant does not here state the case for eudaemonism, but only the case against it. This is intelligible because what he calls now - very strangely - eudaemonism, is the position which he himself adopts. You know, ordinarily Kant rejects eudaemonism as a principle. But he happens to call this position here "eudaemonism."

Now we come to number three.

Reader: "Concerning the Abderitic hypothesis of the human race for the predetermination of its history."

Strauss: It is the only one which he calls a hypothesis. In other words, to make clear - this is the common sensical view, as you will see. And what Kant wants to point out by this very title is that this common sensical view is based on a hypothesis.

Reader: "This opinion may well have the majority of voices on its side. Bustling folly is the character of our species. People hastily set off for the path of the good but do not persevere steadfastly upon it. Indeed, in order to avoid being bound to a single goal - even if only for the sake of variety - they reverse the plan of progress, build in order to demolish, and impose upon themselves the helpless effort of rolling the stone of Sisyphus up hill in order to let it roll back down again.

"The principle of evil in the natural predisposition of the human race, therefore, does not seem to be amalgamated, blended here with that of the good, but each principle rather appears to be neutralized by the other. Inertia, which is called here stagnation, would be the result of this. It is a vain affair to have good so alternate with evil that the whole traffic of our species with itself in this flow would have to be considered as a mere farcical comedy. For this can endow our species with no greater value in the eyes of reason than that which other animal species possess, species which carry out this game with fewer costs and without expenditure of thought."

Strauss: That is an allusion to Kant's criticism of Abderatism. As I stated on an earlier occasion, what Kant calls here "Abderatism" was the old view - ups and down, no final

movement towards an extreme evil, nor final movement towards a perfect good, but - as far as the fate of kingdoms, empires and peoples is concerned - ups and downs.

Kant indicates here his criticism at the end - the dignity of man which he owes to the moral disposition in him - makes it necessary to look at the human species with other eyes than upon other species.

This application to the philosophy of history is not necessarily valid because this can very well be provided for, and was provided for, by the immortality of the soul which was denied to the brutes ordinarily. So this is not sufficient.

Kant will now try to reach a decision. Let us read the heading of the next section.

Reader: "The problem of progress is not to be resolved directly through experience."

Strauss: That, of course, was not at the time the view of everybody. Think of Kant's famous contemporaries - Condorcet, the men who elaborated a progressive scheme allegedly on the basis of obervation. There is the famous picture of (inaudible) - the Dark Ages. Then the superstitious Turk conquered Constantinople. This is, in a way, the peak of darkness. Yet this leads to the wandering of the Greek scholars to Italy - to humanism. Then you have the Reformation. Then you have the great glories - Bacon, Descartes, and Newton. Now in our age we have and some other great men. The punishments become more humane, and so on.

So there is empirical proof. Kant says, "What is the reason why it cannot be proven by experience?"

Reader: "Even if we felt that the human race - considered as a whole - was to be conceieved as progressing and proceeding forward for however long a time, still no one can guarantee that now - this very moment - with regard to the physical disposition of our species the epic of its decline would not be liable to occur. And, inversely, it is moving backwards and in an accelerated fall into baseness, a person may not despair even then of encountering a juncture, a turning point, where the moral predisposition in our race would be able to turn anew towards the better."

Strauss: So, even granted that this story was true as told by the men of the Enlightenment from the Renaissance up to, say, 1770, how do you know that there will not be another collapse as Voltaire, for example, took it for granted. That every bit of great culture of the mind would be followed by a decline. This cannot be made out empirically. Yes?

Student: Doesn't Kant say earlier as was said that you can predict the behavior of the race, for instance, with population statistics and so on? Doesn't he suggest this?

Strauss: Yes. But even here you have to make some qualifications. For example, so and so many births, so and so many deaths, so and so many marriages, assuming that there will be no Black Death. Assuming that there will not be great earthquakes in a country particularly exposed to earthquakes and so on. This is possible within limits. But the basis we have here for this progres is the experience of progress. According to the then prevailing view there were two such epochs - one in Greece, including much of Hellenistic and Roman times. Then, the Middle Ages. Then, again, a new beginning in the Renaissance leading up to the 18th century.

This would, at best, show some kind of cycles. It wouldn't prove a linear movement of progress.

The mortality tables have nothing to do with the question of progress. That only showed that there was an amazing regularity where no one thought that it would be expressable in numerical terms. That has nothing to do with our question.

But Kant goes on in the next section.

Reader: "Yet the prophetic history of the human race must be connected with some experience. There must be some experience in the human race which, as an event, points to the disposition and capacity of the human race to be the cause of its own advance towards the better. And, since this should be the act of a being endowed with freedom, towards the human race as being the author of this advance. But from a given cause, an event as an effect can be predicted only if the circumstances prevail which contribute to it. That these conditions must come to pass sometime or other can, of course, be predicted in general as in the calculation of probability and games of chance. But that prediction cannot enable us to know if what is predicted is to happen in my life and I am to have the experience of it. Therefore, an event must be sought . . . but rather as divided into nations and states as it is encountered."

Strauss: So some experience is necessary to make it credible that there will be such a progress. This experience is stated by Kant in the next paragraph. We cannot read the whole. Mrs. _____, you repeat it. What is that experience which proves that there is an inclination towards the good in man in the politically relevant sense?

Student: It is not, as I said, the experience of the French Revolution itself, but the ideal which caused it and the moral (by that I mean the disinterested end) universal sympathy to the Revolution.

Strauss: Outside of France and especially in Germany.

So, in other words, the fact that so many people did not expect the French, of course, to make the Revolution. The French, one could say, made it with a view to the betterment of their own situation and that wouldn't prove a moral inclination. It simply would prove that they are selfish.

But here we see people who have nothing to do with France and who are subject to their sovereign, say the King of Prussia. They will never derive any benefit from the French Revolution. It happens, as it were, on another planet. When they see it - just as when we see on television that another cattle rustler is caught by Mat Dillon - we enjoy it, and that shows that we are fundamentally good guys.

What do you say to Kant's argument? Does it show that the Germans - especially the educated Germans, the professors and writers - show a perfectly pure, disinterested . . .

Student: Kant himself waited for his newspaper every morning . . .

Strauss: This shows only his interest, his concern, but it doesn't show that it had something to do with his desire to better his own condition.

Student: I would say that, insofar as it was people such as Kant, who were disinterested in and excited about this, that they were perhaps more interested or had more to gain.

Strauss: Well, in the case of men like Kant, one cannot look into men's hearts, but we have sufficient evidence from contemporaries that the educated classes liked less and less being a half-feudal order because of the mere fact that they were not of noble origin which led to their being treated like second class citizens.

I would say that the desire not to be a second class citizen is a healthy desire, but it is also not unselfish.

In addition, of course, there were groups of Germans who went to Paris. A part of Germany was already liberated by the French Revolutionary armies.

So you can sympathize with something even though there is not the slightest chance that this will be of benefit to you and yours. But this is out of a common social position. These rudiments which I believe are now told innocent children in the second year - that there are such things as social groups, classes or whatever they are called. This would be sufficient to question Kant. Yes?

Student: A pre-historical argument to strengthen your position. That the quasi-feudal order that existed in Germany in the time of the petty princes having become sovereigns, had been a deliberate Frenchifying and it had, in particular depressed the status of burghers. was squeezing everybody out to build himself his own Versailles, complete with French. But they saw the real Versailles go down under the boots of . . .

Strauss: And you do not forget these famous things which are well-known in this country. The Hessians, for example, who sold their soldiers to the British for fighting the

American colonists. And other German princes did the same. It was a rather atrocious thing, as Kant himself has stated. Germany was, to some extent, ripe for the revolution. Owing to certain complications it did not come out in Germany until after the Second World War. This was the first time that the liberal, democratic Germany was victorious.

So this is not a very powerful argument, but it seemed to be very good to Kant.

He speaks of the demonitory history of mankind in the next section, after having spoken of - although not explicitly - the French Revolution. The second paragraph.

Reader: "Now I claim to be able to predict to the human race even without prophetic insight, according to the aspects and omens of our day, the attainment of this goal, i.e. the republican constitutions everywhere. That is, I predict its progress towards the better which, from now on, turns out to be no longer completely retrogressive. For such a phenomenon in human history is not to be forgotten because it has revealed a tendency . . ."

Strauss: Literally translated: it becomes nevermore forgotten. That is underlined by Kant.

Reader: " . . . because it has revealed a tendency and faculty in human nature for improvement such that no politician affecting wisdom might have conjured out of the course of things hitherto existing, and one which nature and freedom alone united at the human race in conformity with inner principles of right could have promised. But, so far as time is concerned it can promise this only indefinitely and as a contingent event."

Strauss: The key sentence here is what Kant underlined. This can never be forgotten. That means, reaction might win out again, but the fact that such a revolution based on principles (not just a rising because of famine or repression), this can no longer be forgotten and, therefore, this spectacle will be re-enacted, hopefully in less bloody form, in the future. That is a decisive point.

This is, indeed, a premise of the belief in progress. That there is no oblivion because if every generation learns something or does something which has never been learned or done before, yet at the price of forgetting certain things which an earlier generation knew, then you cannot simply speak of progress.

Therefore, a progressivism which is not concerned with a preservation of the traditions out of which it grew, is a very foolish progressivism. People will forget that which made possible the things of which they are so proud.

Now the next paragraph.

Reader: "But, even if the end viewed in connection with this event should not now be attained . . . Because then, in an affair so important for humanity the intended constitution at a certain time must finally attain that constancy which instruction by repeated experience suffices to establish in the minds of all men."

Strauss: You see, the "must." "Must achieve it." In other words, here there is a full determinist. Certain necessary causes brought about the revolution and this revolution fails in the end. But it cannot be forgotten. This memory is a causal factor in whatever happens later. And because it is not forgotten, the mistakes of the revolutionaries are also not forgotten and they will improve their policy for the next time and so forth.

In the next paragraph, however, Kant makes clear that there is one point for which he cannot vouch, namely that there might not be an end to the human race prior to the establishment of the just society. In other words, the entropy might bring the whole thing to an end. This is an interesting admission.

Let us turn to page 150 in the second paragraph.

Reader: "The idea of a constitution in harmony with the natural rights of man . . . as a nation of mature understanding would prescribe them for itself, although they would not be literally canvassed for their consent."

Strauss: Kant admits here that many, many wars are still needed to bring about the happy condition of perpetual peace which does not surprise us too much, I believe.

In the sequel, Kant makes clear what can happen (as we have seen last time) - a progress in legality. I.e., the external actions of men will become better, but that doesn't mean that the intention - the morality itself - will progress because this has nothing to do with any causality.

Towards the end, right before the formal conclusion, Kant makes clear what infinite progress towards perpetual peace means.

Reader: "That which can be expected and exacted from men in this area towards the advancement of this end we can anticipate only a negative wisdom. Namely, that they will see themselves compelled to render the greatest obstacle to morality, that is to say war, and constantly retard this advancement, firstly by degrees more humane and then rarer. And finally, to renounce offensive war altogether in order to enter upon the constitution which, by its nature and without loss of power, is founded upon genuine principles of right and which can persistently progress towards the better."

Strauss: Here Kant makes clear what this infinite progress towards perpetual peace means. There are certain first steps to make war more humane. Meaning decent treatment of prisoners of war and so on. That is number 1. The Geneva Convention.

And then more rare. Say, one war in a century instead of two or three.

Then aggressive war will disappear. But if aggressive war disappears, will any war be left? How should we understand that?

Student: Subjectively aggressive war. It used to be considered the only manly thing to do - to knock over as many neighbors as you could.

Strauss: But what does Kant mean? A war where both sides can act on the defensive, yet they have different views of their rights, and they cannot settle it in any other way than by war.

Student: It could be Malthusean.

Strauss: No, no. That would be entirely different. We are concerned now with how we can understand infinite progress. Why should there be a need for infinite progress, one could rightly say. After all, those seem to be finite steps. Considerable improvement of international law and, then, finally something like the United Nations, but universal. A guarantee that all conflicts between members of such a United Nations would be settled by arbitration. Those are finite. Why should be needed an infinite development?

Student: You might keep the U.N. peace-keeping forces and really use them.

Strauss: But this would be policing. This would not be different from what is done in a civil society by a policeman. That would not be war proper, although it would look like war. There would be a strange change in the meaning of war. Like the Cold War.

Let us leave it at that. Are there any points that any of you would like to raise?

Student: I was wondering if you would say something about the Second Supplement about philosophers becoming kings. Page 115.

Strauss: Kant does not suggest the rule of philosophers. On the contrary, philosophers are subjects. But these subjects could conceivably become the rulers by becoming the teachers of the governors.

Student: Your answer seemed to imply that Kant's answer is not so different from that of the ancients.

Strauss: In this respect, no. Only that Kant has a greater certainty that this publication of the philosophic teaching will be successful than, say, Plato or Aristotle.

Student: On the other hand, he seems to believe that phiosophers are more corruptible than Plato and Aristotle thought they might be.

Strauss: They mean two different things. Kant means his colleagues, and Plato and Aristotle meant true philosophers.

Where does he speak about the corruptibility of philosophers?

Student 2: He says that, "the class of philosophers is by nature incapable of plotting and lobbying." The last sentence.

Strauss: This was prior to the age of the Foundations.

Let me conclude, then, since we have read Kant with a joke partly based on Kant which a very witty man I know made after he had been in this country for some years. He raised this German question which in this form doesn't occur in Kant, but which is Kantian in the formulation: How is thinking at all possible? (German translation) Given the fact that Kant in a way suggested that thinking is possible by laying foundations. This friend of mine gave an American answer to this German question, How is thinking altogether possible? Answer: Through foundations.

As long as I lay no foundations, where should they lobby (?)

Student: With administrations.

Strauss: Yes. But the administration was self-administration. The rector was always a professor elected for a year. Therefore, not much could be done. But given human depravity, doubtless all sorts of corruption was possible even in these wonderful times.

Seminar on Kant

Session XVII, June 1, 1967

This is meant to be a free discussion, but in order to limit that freedom reasonably and in order to have a free and not a locentious discussion, let me state the subject to be taken up.

The first point that would be taken up would be the whole question of reading, and reading Kant in particular. Is there anyone who wishes to speak on this subject? After all, we have some experience with that.

Student: I was wondering if you could go into more detail than you have about the relation between the Critique of Practical Reason and the Critique of Judgement, and the relation these might have to the reading with which we are primarily concerned.

Strauss: Certainly there are such relations, but let us first take the general question. You have read other books, but let us limit ourselves to the books we have read here in the seminar. Kant's books are different from say, this year we read Nietzsche and we read the Platonic Apology and Crito. Are these books of the same character, of the same kind?

Student: I mean to say something about the knowledge of the kind of writing we see in the Apology and Crito should not have been considered by a man like Kant. I don't mean it to be merely an historical question.

Strauss: I don't know of any consideration of the possibility by Kant. We know some of the facts of the way in which Kant wrote. Between 1770 and 1781, the date that the Critique of Pure Reason appeared he did not publish anything. That was a great revolution in Kant's thought. That meant the great breakthrough to his transcendental philosophy. Then he wrote down the Critique of Pure Reason in a very short time. I believe that it was seven months. And while he wrote that he wrote down also certain things regarding morality in the Critique of Pure Reason as we have seen. But this was provisional, without Kant's being fully aware of its provisional character. When he applied his mind to it in the writing of the Foundation of the Metaphysics of Morals things looked rather different and then a few years later when he wrote the Critique of Practical Reason, other changes took place. So Kant's position was developing in crucially important matters while writing these things. And this process hadn't stopped by the time he wrote his later, shorter essays which we have read in the English translation.

So Kant does not stand above in the manner in which Plato stands above, but he is in the midst of it. If this is better or worse would be a very long question. At any rate, one cannot expect the same neatness found in Plato and Aristotle.

That is, at least, thouse works which we know were really written by Aristotle.

But if you take a writer closer to Kant - Leibniz - in a way the book by Leibniz is the Theodicee. This is clearly not comparable to some books written in antiquity on the Middle Ages, but still it is something. Leibniz's position itself did not undergo a change while he wrote it. He only had to think how to suggest it as clearly and suggestively and so on as possible.

So, in other words, from Kant's writings no one would get an inkling of a possibility of the writings of another type to which he frequently referred. This much we can say.

Student: I wanted to offer one point which struck me at the time, not in contradiction, but merely to underline that it is not black and white. Kant is humorous and humor can lead up (inaudible) and I think that that appears in the very last thing which we read after he had had his trouble with the censor. It was a small work and he was perhaps paying a little more attention to presentation. When he brings up the business of the French Revolution and says that the enthusiasm with which it was greeted in Germany gives us hope, his tone may have been a little bit (inaudible) Because when he goes on he says that the revolution won't be forgotten. The fact that the Germans greeted it with such cheers and hurrahs which he named as the cause is not, in fact, the cause which he goes on to talk about. It is an irony to introduce the French Revolution under the more polite term of German disinterested response.

Strauss: The two we can say theological writings which we have read - the Idea for a Universal History and The End of All Things, one dealing with the beginning and the other with the end of the Bible. Here Kant explicitly tried to inject reason where he did not find much reason. Surely these things are there, but they are rather obvious.

What I have in mind is not a matter of style. Kant is a very powerful writer. When this does not come true in the English - this is the difficulty with translation altogether, but the German is very powerful. Even the long sentences which are so hard to follow in English do not have the same character in German. The Germans never underwent this pruning tradition connected with Addison - the Spectator - the notion that a sentence should not have any clauses. Someone compared it to walking like a dog which has great merits no doubt.

Student: Was Kant the first writer - that is, serious writer- who no longer used the old method of writing?

Strauss: There is a great difficulty in the older method of writing. How many men used it altogether? I couldn't answer this question because one would have to be infinitely more learned than I am, and perhaps than anybody can be to give you an answer in terms of numbers. And you must not forget

the many men who simply were in fundamental agreement with the accepted use of the times and could be very great men nevertheless. Let us not be snobbish nonconformists. But I would say that among the greatest philosophers of modern times Kant surely conceals much less than his predecessors. Think only of Hume who seems to be very direct and quite straightforward in his Treatise on Human Nature. But once you look at the Dialogues on Natural Religion which is an indication of The Nature of the Gods by Cicero and where you (inaudible) It is as difficult to say as in the case of Cicero himself.

Student: I'm glad that you mentioned Hume because it seemed to show an awareness on his part of this whole problem that he used as the motto to one of his treatises where he quotes Tacitus as saying, "Oh happy the times when you can say what you think." And, to take another person of direct influence on Kant - Rousseau - you have called our attention to the Reveries of the Solitary Wanderer where he has this long discussion of lying . . .

Strauss: Yes. Rousseau clearly has much more in common with the earlier way of writing than Kant does.

You must also not forget that the other men of whom we think in modern times - none of them were university professors. Kant was the first and his famous German successors also were university professors. Descartes is not thinkable as a professor not was he one. He almost became one, but then he ran away before it was too late. For a poor man like Kant there was no alternative. He could only have otherwise become a literateur and that was somehow not the right thing to do.

So it is clear that it would not make sense to read Kant in the way in which other great writers of the past are read.

We must not forget, of course, one of the great masters of German literature, Lessing. He knew very well of this other kind of writing and he is, perhaps, the latest witness we have to that. Kant knew his writings, but this did not affect him particularly.

That has also much to do with Kant's moralism. You could also take [illegible] which you find also today - that one should say what one thinks and, if one cannot say it because one is afraid of the consequences either for oneself or for other human beings, then one should keep one's mouth shut. This is writing sincerely without any rules of any kind. This strict moral view is, we can say, implied in Kant's teaching. So, apart from everything else, Kant had a moral incentive never to say what he does not think. He himself made this distinction. It is not immoral not to say what one thinks, but it is immoral to say what one does not think, especially since the modern liberal and democratic development has made it practically harmless for anybody to say anything as you doubtless know. Some people still find that there is too much censorship still as this young man in California of whom I have read, but they acted in protest and nothing happened.

Student: Could you tell us where Lessing discusses these styles of writing?

Strauss: Yes. I don't know whether these things are translated into English. One is called Leibniz on Eternal Punishments. The other is called Bisabachias - that was a Polish writer - Bisabachias on Trinity. Then Ernst and Dialogues on Freemasons. These are probably the three most important. But there are also other discussions of these matters in his _____. Here there are some discussions on how to read Homer, tentatively stated, but very interesting. I think that these are the most important.

Ernst and , these are two men. But in German "Ernst" means also seriousness. A man who is not serious, but jokes, is also called dschohk. And what Lessing said there about freemasonry had very little to do really empirically with freemasonry, but with freemasonry noumenally as Kant would say. That is, man dedicated to the primacy of speculation who for this reason is secretive.

There is another writing of Lessing which has to do only indirectly with this question, but in an indirect way very much and that is the education of the human race. Some enemies of Lessing have asserted that this was not written that this was not written by Lessing, but by somebody else because they wish to deprive Lessing of the great honor. I think that they are right in this respect. I think that this was a piece given to him to be edited. I think that this corresponds very well with the truth. He was beginning to play with such a possibility, a philosophy of history, the history of mankind as the divine education of the human race.

Now let us come a bit closer to what the subject of the seminar was, philosophy of history in Kant. In order to pose the question properly, one must start from the fact that philosophy of history is a recent thing. The term seems to have been coined by Voltaire around the middle of the 18th century in the first section of essays. But one can say with some justice that prior to Voltaire Vico started that in his New Science. One cannot trace it beyond.

But we cannot but consider what happened to philosophy of history afterwards. Hegel and beyond Hegel up to the present day. Up to date, one can say, it is the fundamental question of philosophy because, as now asserted, the historical character of human thought means that it is impossible for man and even for the greatest man, to transcend his time. The individual is the son of his time, as Hegel put it or, to use Nietzche phrase, he is the stepson of his time. But human thought is necessarily dated.

That is diametrically opposed to the premodern view, the view still held by Kant, that human thought aims at what is transhistorical, beyond change and, therefore, human thought must be in this decisive respect beyond change.

In Kant this fundamental question comes up in the last few pages of the Critique of Pure Reason in the section "The History of Pure Reason." This might seem to intimate that pure reason itself undergoes a history. But that is surely more than Kant means, although the fact that he could write these four pages with this title is a straw in the wind.

In Kant we are concerned with a much more limited question, namely, whether a philosophy of history is possible. A philosophy of history meaning an attempt to show meaning in history as opposed to what Kant calls the Abderitic view according to which there is no meaning in history, but ups and downs without any meaning. History is not here a single process directed toward an end and achieving this end either in finite time or in infinite time.

The question in Kant becomes more precise. In Kant's great, systematic works there is hardly anything said about this philosophy of history except the one paragraph in the Critique of Judgement. But, on the other hand, Kant has written quite a few pieces, as we have seen, essays pertaining to the question of the philosophy of history.

Therefore, the question is, "How is it that Kant is concerned with the philosophy of history yet keeps it somehow outside of the sanctuary of his system?" And this was the question with which we are chiefly concerned in this course.

I will stop again and hear your suggestions.

Student: When you said before that pure reason doesn't have a history, that means in a sense that it doesn't have a development. In that sense, Kant is interested in even how reason can progress and be enlightened. (inaudible)

Strauss: Yes, that makes sense. In what sense does pure reason not have a history? For example, could the principle of causality as Kant defines it ever have been unknown?

Student: Well, it is kind of an interesting thing. In the Foundations of Natural Science he deduces the laws of nature and says that these are a priori truths of reason and yet the obvious question is, "Why weren't these laws of nature known before Newton?"

Strauss: That doesn't have to give rise to a very profound question. Simply, man needed quite a preparation before this could be seen in its purity. But once it is seen, nothing changes.

Look at it this way. Men appeared on earth. No one knows when. But it is clear that in his primary state he was wholly unable to be a scientist or philosopher. The urgent needs of the body and his passions - what Hobbes calls the state of nature. Then men began to build cities and it was possible the philosophy and science would arise. But slowly, hesitatingly. Trial and error. And it took a long time before reason

discovered the right way. Apart from one relatively uninteresting problem, formal logic which, according to Kant, was completed by Aristotle.

A clear grasp of the right method had come with Copernicus as Kant presents it, and Galileo - you know the names he mentions there. The development culminated in Newton. Still this was not the most perfect exercise of theoretical reason. It did not mean that reasoning man understood reason itself. They tried to do that. Men like Descartes and Locke, Hume. But this whole development - this greatest development of theoretical reason - pointed to a clarification of reason itself. And this, according to Kant was in principle achieved by him and not before, although Hume was of some help and, in another way, Leibniz. But the decisive insight that intuition and thinking - one the principle of the British and the other of the continental rationalists - have to be properly seen in their radical difference and their necessary cooperation. And that was done, according to him, by Kant himself. Kant did not claim that he had completed the work, but he had the notion that it would be a matter of about twenty years from the time that he wrote the Critique of Pure Reason that it would be completed. Then what would have to be done would be simply to spread the knowledge of it, especially influence governments so that they act according to the principles of reason. The just or rational state, in other words, leading to the just and rational league of states.

However, the practical realization, the practical amount of reason, that is an infinite process, as Kant says. But the decisive changes could very well be made in the foreseeable future.

Kant is not concerned with the possibility that this might collapse again. Even if it would, even if there would be another retrogression into barbarism, this would be rather sad for the contemporaries of this event, but if the human race is not extinguished and they start again we know quite well that what they would be led to eventually is again the critique of pure reason unless they remain a bit below that level. That could be.

Student: (inaudible) . . . because morality is not something which has to be understood. It is something which has to be acted upon.

Strauss: It has also to be understood.

Student: (inaudible)

Strauss: Yes, but if you act without understanding properly that is not . . . You know, in the first part of the Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals towards the end where he makes clear why philosophy must come in because to be innocent is a very nice thing.

Student: But it is hard to maintain.

Strauss: Exactly. And, therefore, you need full theoretical clarity about the principle.

Student: I wonder if I might read a passage from (inaudible) on Kant regarding something which you said in this course. "In the Critique of Judgement Kant sets himself the task to 'seek out what Nature can supply for the purpose of preparing man for what he himself must do in order to be an end in himself.' This is necessary if Nature is to be shown to have value. To show that it has is the sole task of Kant's construction of history."

Strauss: That is not quite true. One could say that that is the meaning of paragraph 83, but Kant singled out three questions as parts of the question, "What is man?" What can I know? What can I do? and What can I hope? The philosophy of history has very much to do with the question, "What can I hope?" What can I reasonably hope? Or what am I morally obliged to hope?

I remember this article. Its greatest weakness - and it does contain some good observations - is that he does not see the competition (if one may say so) in Kant's thought between the immortality of the soul (life after death) and the philosophy of history. The immortality of the soul becomes a postulate of practical reason in the Critique of Pure Reason, whereas the meaningfulness of history does not become such a postulate. And I think that we can understand it very well.

If the human problem is solved and can only be solved after death, then any earthly solution of any other human problem is less important. If the human problem is to bring about - not to bring about because man cannot bring about - but to have brought about a reconciliation (a harmony) between worthiness of happiness and happiness. And worthiness of happiness means to be good. If this can only be brought about after death then the other questions are of secondary important. They are morally relevant, but in a secondary way. They are important because it is our duty to act well in this life, in this world. And, therefore, we must have (we cannot help having) an interest in the outcome of what we are doing.

In his discussion with Moses Mendelssohn in Theory and Practice Section 2, I think, he makes this point. Mendelssohn was very concerned with the fate of the Jews. Kant says, "Hence Mendelssohn must have been concerned with the outcome of his epoch and with the fate of the following generations," although Mendelssohn took the older, Abderitic view - ups and downs - which Kant rejects. I regard this as a very important point. Let me put it this way. Both doctrines - the immortality of the soul and the philosophy of history - are not theoretical doctrines, according to Kant. That is clear. They are projections of practical reason, but with different weight.

The greatest weight is attached to the immortality of the soul rather than to the future on earth.

In the Jewish traditional language the other world is called the coming world, the world to come. This has a double meaning, of course. It can mean coming after oneself in the other life or it can mean future or what in Judaism would be the Messianic. And in Kant the emphasis is still stronger on the other life in the ordinary sense.

What happened in the nineteenth century, especially with Hegel, of course, is that the concern is with the satisfaction and completion in this life. So, in other words, the French Revolution and its consequences are infinitely more important. This is what counts for Hegel, not a life after death. Kant is, in this respect, old fashioned.

Student: As I understood the point which was trying to make, the function of nature which Kant is trying to restore both through the Critique on Judgement and his essays on history is not so much to provide a reward for morality or that happiness which would then conflict with the immortality of the soul, but rather to set the stage for morality. In other words, Nature shows that it is concerned with moral law, but while the moral law does not derive from the standard of Nature, Nature is in harmony with that standard not so much because it rewards morality, but because it forces man to be moral.

Strauss: That is not so. The full moral duty of man going much beyond what any individual can fulfill and even beyond what absolute monarchs can do would be the establishment of a just society, a universal society. And that means a league of republics governing, republics being by nature peaceful. You remember that?

This goal can be said to be the end that Nature pursues. That is what Kant says. And Kant gives a kind of proof of that. International trade increasing, positive religions losing their old powers leading to religious wars. Above all, wars which become ever more unbearable and compelling men in the direction of universal peace. Kant is reasonably sure of that, but this cannot satisfy him because this does not guarantee morality as he sees it, but only legality. You remember that strong statement about the nation of devils. Nature would force devils - Machiavellian politicians, unscrupulous businessmen and whatever other kind of vicious person you can think of - into the just order evermore. But they remain the same S.O.B.'s that they were. To transform oneself from such a Machiavellian into a good human being, that cannot be done by Nature nor by God. Otherwise it would mean interference with freedom. Only man, the individual, can make the change. Therefore, a philosophy of history cannot be as important as morality itself.

There are certain complications. We have seen that in these essays that the progress towards the just society is not

necessarily a moral progress, but it is morally relevant. As moral beings we must be concerned with it.

Take another example. No moral man can wish to live in a state of society in which moral action is forbidden by the government. Is this not so?. That would be unthinkable, would it not? In a way the Nazis had such an existence, in a way the Communists. That doesn't mean that mean that morality demands that the world be made safe for morality. That would be too simple. Somehow sacrifice belongs to morality. It cannot be so simple. But, on the other hand, there could be a state where no moral sense could even develop because of government and other pressures. So there is a moral interest in this political, legal improvement. But this political, legal improvement is in the decisive respect meaningless. Namely, a nation of devils. That remains.

One can see what Hegel did and, therefore, what is underlying Marx. A complete disregard of life after death and the assumption that the strict dividing line between legality and morality, as Kant calls it, is not practical reason. That is to say, men who habitually act well if only from low motives are not so terribly different from men who habitually act well from noble motives. Something of this kind is implied in what Hegel and Marx said.

Kant is here, of course, a sterner moralist. By the way, Kant's vengeance came with (inaudible)

Student: In the Preface to the Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, there seems to be a qualification to the statement about a nation of devils. He says that no practical rules could ever maintain a long-term conformity (inaudible) Men are not devils, but (inaudible)

Strauss: Kant does not say that men are devils. He says, "Some men." And even if all men were devils they, nevertheless, would be driven to that. But I wish that you could read to me the passage.

Student: I don't have a copy with me, but it is right at the end of the Preface.

Strauss: Well, Mr. Rankin will try to find it and then we will discuss it.

Student: He says that this historical evolution is in the decisive respect meaningless. But isn't it true that in certain epochs - particularly the modern epoch - it is more possible for men to be moral than in, say, the Roman Empire or some time much earlier? Isn't it, in a way, very meaningful that history . . .

Strauss: Sure. That was a deliberate overstatement. I spoke first of the moral relevance of the history, but it is morally relevant without being intrinsically moral.

That is the point. Therefore it doesn't have the status of morality proper.

If one takes a somewhat broader view of the situation and tries to see Kant within the context of what modern political philosophy was about, one would have to say the following things, I believe. What happened from Machiavelli on was a deliberate lowering of the standards both of the Biblical and of the classical traditions. And, in the formula of Machiavelli himself no imaginary kingdoms, no utopias, no kingdoms of God, but human commonwealths or kingdoms taking men absolutely as they are, i.e. not expecting virtue from them, but rather expecting them to be guided by tough motivations like desire for security, property, for fame, for power. And if you start from below, as it were. If you build from low but solid ground then you can succeed. You have a change, at least to succeed. This program was then elaborated and made more concrete by such men as Hobbes, Locke, Adam Smith and others. This Machiavellian ingredient becomes always visible. I referred more than once to private vice, public benefit which is preserved in Kant with the nation of devils.

The first thing which Kant does, we can say, is firmly accepting the modern tradition, especially in natural science but not only there, is to restore the original dignity of morality and moral standards in a way that had been tried before Kant by Shaftsberry. But Shaftsberry was consciously belonging to the angels rather than to the moderns. That is a different story.

Kant, in no way wishing to reverse the decision in favor of the moderns which had been made in the 17th century, nevertheless wishes to make for the first time morality, properly understood, the basis for politics. So his criticism of Machiavelli is at the same time a criticism of Aristotle and Plato. The whole principle of _____ _____ understood in whichever way means this. So Kant's work is then, at first glance, the highest point of moral thought in politics which ever was.

Yet, when we look more closely, we see that this other, sinister ingredient (if I may call it that way from the old-fashioned point of view) lives on in Kant. Or, to use other words for a crude thought, Kant's idealism has important connections with this kind of typically modern political realism. And this is exactly what becomes so clear in this philosophy of history and that is very interesting.

It is, of course, also within his moral philosophy proper - insofar as the fundamental part of Kant's moral philosophy is developed in his Metaphysics of Morals - is the doctrine of right (the second part being the doctrine of virtue). The doctrine of right asserts that there is only one innate or inborn right, the right to freedom. That takes the place of self-preservation in pre-Kantian thought.

But what does this freedom mean? I think that I read to you this passage. That this inborn right that man has includes the right to lie, i.e. includes the right to something which is morally bad. It is clear that we could not have a reasonable measure of freedom, politically speaking, from censorship and nose magistrates if we did not have the right to lie. And, yet, there is something remarkable in that that philosopher who has condemned lying in any form as much as Kant has done should grant man a right to lie which is to be respected by every other man. That is also quite realistic.

In the same context Kant raises the question, "How come men call ethics 'the theory of duties' and not 'the theory of rights'?" I do not wish to go into the questions of what these terms "right" and "duties" meant in premodern times, but that Kant can raise this question shows, I think, that a tremendous change has taken place. No one has ever doubted, say, that duties whether these _____, _____ or _____. Probabely _____ - a Stoic term from Cicero. Of course, morality is the doctrine of duties. But for Kant, the heir to people like Hobbes and Locke, this could become a question. Why not with equal right the doctrine of rights? Surely no one can speak of duties without bringing in by implication rights. If you have the duty to live for your country, you have the right to live. Because otherwise you cannot do your duty to your country.

So duties imply rights, but whether that is spelled out and emphasized makes a great difference. The other way around too. You cannot speak of rights without admitting implicit duties. But the question is also, "To what extent are the duties emphasized?" We must watch very carefully in reading earlier books of political philosophy - to what extent is there an awareness of this distinction between duties and rights and, if there is, what is the emphasis on it?

A simple example. When Socrates says in the Apology, "_____." "I am just" (literally translated) "in making a speech of defense." Does he mean "I am obliged to do this. It is my duty to do it?" or "It is my right to do it?" That cannot be settled by the term "_____" which he uses. Taking everything into consideration I would say that it means, "I am obliged to do it." Duty.

Aristotle says in the Ethics, "What the law does not command, it forbids." That creates some difficulties for modern interpreters because is this not terribly tyrannical? "What the law does not command, it does not forbid." That is what we would all say. And that is what Hobbes certainly said. But Aristotle's view is the older view, the view belonging to ancient law. We are in every respect subject to law and when the law does not command it forbids. Therefore, as one famous commentator raises the question in this connection, "The law never commands to live or to breathe and, therefore, are we forbidden to breathe?" Well, the answer is that the law commands that we, at least if we are of age,

are ready to defend the country. And by this very fact, it commands us to breathe because if you would stop breathing, you would no longer be able to fight and so on.

This question, I believe, has never been studies properly. It is a manageable question because it would be a question to be addressed to the great authors writing on the law. But it has never been properly done. One would have to have access to a first-rate library because one would have to go through all kinds of out-of-the-way things. So I can speak now only from memory. We wouldn't have these books here.

In Thomas Aquinas's discussion of natural law, for example, there is no discussion of rights properly. But when you read later commentators, say in the 17th century, there they are mentioned. They are not yet mentioned in Thomas Aquinas.

How come? Is this the influence of Roman law or of positive law, at any rate on philosophy or is this not a whole change in the atmosphere which leads to this greater concern with rights. That is the question.

By the way, a former student of mine - now chairman of the department at Cornell - Walter Burns, wrote his doctoral thesis on freedom and virtue, and I think that that is a proper formulation of what the issue was. The moral principle was virtue or something like virtue, say, righteousness in the Biblical sense. And, then, from a certain moment on, freedom, in contradistinction to virtue, becomes the guiding theme. This change surely has taken place. There is very important evidence for this in Hobbes and Locke and Rousseau and Kant and Descartes.

Did you find the passage?

Student: Yes (inaudible)

Strauss: Let me read it. On page 6. "It is not sufficient to that which should be morally good that it conform to the law. It must be done for the sake of the law." In other words, that is the distinction between morality and mere legality. Otherwise, the conformity is merely contingent and [illegible] because, although the unmoral ground may indeed [illegible] and then produce lawful actions, more often it brings forth unlawful ones."

Yes. And this you say contradicts the passage about the nation of devils. Kant speaks here in universal terms. That is so. But could it not be that there is a state of society in which vice does not pay so that the unmoral motive could not find its unmoral outlet, but only a moral outlet?

To take the extremest discussion in Plato's Republic, Book II if every man has to live the whole day in public and even he spent the night, so to say, in public (because everyone could enter his bedroom at any time) where could he do something forbidden? He would be in a glass house all day.

But could there not be a situation in society in which it simply doesn't pay to do something. Take an example - tax evasion. It is an immoral act. But is it not possible that there could be such an excellent system of supervision of tax payers that everyone would pay his taxes because the chances of going to jail would be, say, 95% and so on.

So that remains - what he says here. That remains the general statement concerning the fundamental situation between morality and legality. But there may be situations - and that is, in fact, the meaning of social progress - in which immoral actions do not pay anymore. Whether it is a sound assertion, a realistic assertion, I am not now concerned with that. But this would be the reconciliation of the two statements

Student: I can only explain myself - his placing so much importance upon his own specifications of the principles for a philosophy of history. He says that the philosopher of history can project or show how this course of history is going to come about mainly because he is the one with the generator, so to speak.

Strauss: I will try to restate my objection to your objection or my solution of your objection.

The difference between morality and legality stands fo[illegible] But while legality is a very poor thing compared with morality, nevertheless, the increase in legality is morally relevant.

In a way this is something very common sensical. For example, does not every sensible man wish that the number of murders in the city of Chicago should decrease even if this were only due to the troop procedures? Is this not so? So, in other words, these men who today murder would stop murdering merely because they can't get away with murder. So they do not become good men, but till is it not of some importance? To that extent, what Kant says seems to make sense

Student: (inaudible)

Str[illegible] do not quite understand you. Do you mean that Kan[illegible] philosophy as such is an ingredient in the hi[illegible]? Yes. That is quite possible. I think tha[illegible] course, in mind the Enlightenment as a force on the whole conducive towards political progress which political progress is morally relevant.

Student: (inaudible)

Those people have to be given a sense of duty on rational grounds.

Strauss: Yes. We have seen that. Kant seems to suggest that there is this progress. [illegible] political, social

progress is also moral progress. But that is no necessity and I believe that it is clearer if one leaves it at saying that what Nature brings about or what is brought about by these amoral forces is only legality and not morality. This is morally relevant.

Kant did not unequivocally say (he was very cautious) that this progress in legality leads sooner or later to progress in morality, although we read one or two remarks in which he suggests that. Then, of course, the philosophy of history would have a much higher status - if the progress in legality is a progress in morality. Yet, there would still remain the fact that the harmony between worthiness of happiness and happiness is not achieved in this life. And for this reason one would still have to hope for immortality of the soul. This would still remain.

Student: May I ask what Kant's reply might be to Hegel?

Strauss: It's hard to say. We can, perhaps, say this much (and that I referred to before) that Kierkegaard's rebellion against Hegel's system was a reassertion of Kant's point that the thing which ultimately counts is the morality of the individual as distinguished from political or social progress. This one can say. Yes?

Student 2: (inaudible)

Strauss: Well, Hegel accepted that. You generalize the point. What is the relation of Hegel to Kant? That is what you mean? Well, the simplest form in which one could state the relation is this: Kant's theoretical philosophy is an attempt to explain how experience and the world of experience is possible. That is to say Newton's world as well as the common sense world. In trying to understand that, Kant discovers and lays bare pure reason, pure intuition. Space and time. And also, of course, pure practical reason. These things are all matters not of experience, but of a priori knowledge. Now, are they not real? Is reason not real? Pure reason. That is Hegel's point.

Kant sees that the objects of experience are not the things in themselves. And he says that the thing in itself is unknowable. But Hegel, then, raises the question, "How can you [illegible] it is unknowable? If it is absolutely unknowable then you cannot even know that there is a thing in [illegible]. And so on.

That is only the first step. "But, naturally, you have shown very well, Kant, that the things of experience and the world of experience cannot be the whole." But what is lacking and what one may call "the thing in itself" is the reason. So one can say that Hegel's criticism of Kant is this: Kant has seen that the thing in itself cannot be sought in the earlier manner - in God and immortality of the soul and the postulates of practical reason that he dismisses. But the thing in itself - the absolute, as Hegel would call it, is

that pure reason which Kant has laid bare and whose status - whose metaphysical or ontological status - Kant has simply disregarded. Does this make sense?

So Kant, in other words, began to discover the true theme and subject of metaphysics without drawing the consequences. Hegel draws the consequences.

In connection with that, Hegel can have a theoretical philosophy of history. Namely, this pure reason discovered by Kant as effective in all experience. This necessarily undergoes a history. And this is, in a way, the theme of Hegel's philosophy. Yes?

Student: You said once earlier in the course that you might tell us something about the ancient counterpart to this. What is the relation of what you just spoke about to the ancient understanding of reason?

Strauss: In this respect, Hegel has more to do with the ancients than Kant does. It is no accident that Hegel - at the end of his _____ of the Philosophic Sciences quotes Aristotle's Metaphysics on reason. To that extent Hegel restores Aristotelian views, but, of course, with enormous differences. This intellect which intellects itself. What is in Aristotle only reduced to this very sentence, so to speak. The theme - the whole of philosophy for Hegel - is that being in the highest sense or, as Aristotle put it - the truth of all being is intellect which intellects itself. Even nature - nonhuman nature - is intellect which is, indeed, alienated, as Hegel calls it, but being alienated, of course, it comes back to that from which it is alienated.

Hegel accepts the whole modern development and tries to integrate it into a type of Aristotelian teleology. That is very inexact, of course. The chief reason why it is so inexact is this. The key word of Hegel's is "dialectics" as you surely know. The meaning of "dialectics" as I see it is this. It is a teleological movement, but a movement which is not consciously a movement towards the end. In a given stage, you are confronted with a contradiction. This contradiction points beyond itself towards the next stage and so on until the end is reached. But there is no conscious aiming at the end guiding the process. So this dialectic is and is not teleological. That is the great difference. For Aristotle teleogy would require that the aim - surely in the case of reason itself - that the end is known and guides the process.

Student: Except insofar as the plan for the tree is already concentrated in the acorn.
Strauss: Yes. That is Aristotle. And Hegel uses that to some extent. But still the end precedes. Doesn't it? The acorn is preceded by the oak.

Student: In other words, if you say that it is not consciously moving towards an end if you consider the acorn oak only to be from stage to stage and not also applicable to the whole historical movement.

Strauss: That is true. I am sorry, but I cannot be more precise now.

It is clearest in the case of the development of reason. The end becomes visible at the end of the process, whereas in the platonic dialectics that would not be so. The end would be imperfectly seen in all stages. I am sorry. I cannot be more precise.

Mr. _____, did you have a question? Mr. _____ wrote a Master's paper on T. H. Green. He was a British philosopher around 1870, 1880. He tried to establish a compromise between Kant and Hegel. It would be of some help to take a look at it. Yes?

Student: (inaudible)

Strauss: No. It is not based on these postulates. The postulates follow from it. Theoretical reason (speculative reason) is essentially in need of sense experience, and without it it is empty. Practical reason is not like this. Practical reason dictates to us the moral law. And that is all we know. We can bring it somewhat closer to our understanding by symbolizing it in various ways - what Kant calls the typic of practical reason - but that doesn't affect the substance of the thing.

Student: That would be the answer to the question if you would say to Kant that what he has done in the realm - the moral realm - is to imply a form - a very subtle and rather limited form - of intellectual intuition.

Strauss: That he would deny. Strictly speaking, it is not intuition. It is pure reason without intuition. Kant starts in his analysis, as we have seen, from the common, moral understanding. He asserts that in all ordinary understanding and judgement there is presupposed a law, a duty. If one tries to make clear what this duty and what this law is, then we see that it is the law purely and its formula is the categoric imperative. Our knowledge of what is is, according to Kant, in no way increased except in a negative way insofar as our awareness of morality protects us against the dogmatism of experience. We have seen some very practical examples. Men say, "This is impossible because men are by nature of this and this kind. They will never act in the way that you presuppose, etc." And Kant says that you cannot know. This is a dogmatic assertion about men's possibilities, an assertion based only on how men have behaved hitherto or of how men who you happen to know behave. You cannot draw any conclusions from this as to what man is capable of. To that extent, the categoric imperative acts as a corrective of empirical knowledge of man.

But apart from that, the categoric imperative doesn't tell us anything as to what is. It tells us only how we ought to act. The world beyond the sensible phenomenal world is completely dark. There is only one glimmer of light or you can say of light beams. And that is the categoric imperative.

Student: Does he use a different word when he is talking about this knowledge of the moral law as opposed to knowledge which you get empirically? Is there a different word or is there just a different sense of what you know. Because you clearly know how you ought to act because this is given.

Strauss: Well, I will give you a partial answer. Traditionally, since Aristotle at least, people distinguished between theoretical and practical reason. And then, as far as practical reason is concerned, there is the great question: How is it related to will or to desire as Aristotle understands it?

Kant says that practical reason and are identical. That makes clear how little cognitive practical reason is. Practical reason is the same as the good will which means, of course, that it includes this awareness of the law. Quite a few things follow from it. Kant could, therefore, write a system of ethics called The Metaphysics of Morals. To that extent, there is knowledge. The system is not such an interesting problem because these are only consequences from the categoric imperative.

Student: In that case, part of the consequences are freedom, immortality of the soul . . .

Strauss: No. The immortality of the soul is a postulate. The immortality of the soul and the existence of God are assertions as to "is." Whereas, for example, the character of a good society, say a just society, or the right character of marriage or whatever - these are no "is" assertions, but "ought" assertions.

Student: The virtues, in other words, which are the consequences of . . .

Strauss: Yes. Whereas the postulates are assertions regarding the "is" that are implied or follow from the categoric imperative.

Student: (inaudible)

Strauss: No. Kant rejects that without qualification. There is a radical gulf between 300 imagined dollars and 300 real dollars. And the categoric imperative seems to assert that there is no difference.

Student 2: (inaudible)

Strauss: Yes. Let me put it this way. You have no positive knowledge, but you know surely that man is not exhausted by what you know of him as a phenomenal being. That is clear. This qualification of empirical knowledge as not exhaustive, that is surely knowledge. The rejection of the dogmatism of the practitioner, the man of affairs who says, "I know men and you professors don't." That is clear. That follows.

But, for example, if you say, "A noumenal being belonging to the noumenal world," what does that mean? Life after death? That you do not know. To that extent you do not know man as a noumenal being. You only postulate that. But you know that man is not exhausted by what you know of him phenomenally, as far as the species is concerned or even as regards the individual. You know, there are layers. You can say that you know a man through and through, and there can always be surprises. There are four short stories by Somerset Maugham which exemplify that. He shows two nice gentlemen who prove in a certain crucial moment to be not so nice, and two very wicked men who in the decisive movement reveal something sublime which no one would have expected. That is as far as individuals are concerned

Student: When you use the word "noumenon" in connection with practical philosophy in Kant does it have any different meaning from what it has when you use it in theoretical philosophy?

Strauss: Yes. In the theoretical philosophy it has a purely critical meaning. Putting limits to experience. In the moral, political meaning - where was it in Perpetual Peace. The idea or ideal of the commonwealth as distinguished from anything which the empirical political scientist could observe.

Student: (inaudible)

Strauss: He used another word in _____ in 1770. He used the word _____ - that is the Latin word. I think that since he had to use the word "phenomenal" - that was better than "sensual" for his purposes. "Phenomenal" shows the corresponding adjective regarding the opposite, i.e. "noumenal".

Student: (inaudible) that he should use "intelligible" for that word.

Strauss: That is true. In Germany it would have been a bit awkward to call what is really not accessible at all "the intelligible."

This will be the last question.

Student: In his theoretical philosophy he gives a function to the noumenon. He says that it limits knowledge. But do you think that he is still trying to maintain the basis for a practical philosophy? (inaudible) that he really needs it. He uses it, but he doesn't . . .

Strauss: He needs it in order to make clear the limitation of our knowledge. That, I think, is crucial for Kant.

Student: (inaudible)

Strauss: Kant had to make clear that all our knowledge - theoretical knowledge - is empirical or at least related to emprical knowledge as its condition. This has to be seen against the possibility of a wholly adequate knowledge of the things we know, a knowledge which God would possess. Therefore, it was necessary.

Student: Is there a proof of the noumenon or is the practical use of the noumenon proved?

Strauss: The proof which he gives is the antinomies. Here reason must both assert and deny, say the finiteness and the infinity, temporal and well as spacial, of the world. So we are at our wit's end. And yet the great question is a reasonable question. Therefore, this essential limitation of our reason can be made clear by making the distinction between noumenal and phenomenal.

I am sorry. I have to stop at this point.